

DOORNFONTEIN AND ITS AFRICAN WORKING CLASS, 1914 TO 1935
A STUDY OF POPULAR CULTURE IN JOHANNESBURG

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For Tina

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.


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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a study of the culture that was made by the working people who lived in the slums of Johannesburg in the inter war years. This was a period in which a large proportion of the city's black working classes lived in slums that spread across the western, central and eastern districts of the central city area of Johannesburg. Only after the mid 1930's did the state effectively segregate the city and move most of the black working classes to the municipal locations that they live in today. The culture that was created in the slums of Johannesburg is significant for a number of reasons. This culture shows that the newly formed urban african classes were not merely the passive agents of capitalism. These people were able to respond, collectively, to the conditions that the development of capitalism thrust them into and to shape and influence the conditions and processes that they were subjected to. The culture that embodied these popular responses was so pervasive that it's name, Marabi, is also the name given by many people to the era, between the two world wars, when it thrived. The values and attitudes that were incorporated into marabi culture also had an important influence over the kinds of political activities that were undertaken by the working classes in Johannesburg. Finally, despite the destruction of the slumyards and the culture that was spawned in them, Marabi continues today to influence the culture of black urban townships. This study is an examination of the conditions ~~that~~ gave rise to marabi culture, the network of activities and institutions that made it up, the effect that it had on popular politics in Johannesburg and the forces that went into the segregation of the city and the slums in which Marabi was spawned. Doornfontein is often popularly referred to as the 'home' of Marabi. Thus this slumyard area forms the central focus of the thesis, although other slum areas are also mentioned and examined.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
CAD	Central Archives Depot
CP	Communist Party
CPSA	Church of the Province of South Africa
JCL	Johannesburg City Library
NAD	Natal Archives Depot
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SAP	South African Police
SNA	Secretary for Native Affairs

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PREFACE

For almost two decades after the First World War the predominant form of housing for Johannesburg's black workers was the brick and tin shanties of the slumyards that spread across the central districts of the city. These slums made up the milieu in which most of the city's labouring poor struggled to survive and cope with the conditions of exploitation that came with living in the city under capitalism. The slumdweller's struggle to survive, and to humanize the brutal conditions of town life involved the creation of a variety of new institutions and social relationships in Johannesburg. These included new family structures, welfare networks, forms of mutual cooperation and assistance, informal economic activities and a range of leisure time activities - all of which were accompanied by the creation of a new identity and set of values on the part of the town's newly urbanized black working classes. Thus the slums of Johannesburg, in the inter war period, were a major part of the terrain upon which, to use E.P. Thompson's celebrated phrase, the black working class of Johannesburg, "made itself as much as it was made."¹

This thesis is about the emergence of the slums and the struggles that went into the making of the culture of the people who lived in them.

Some academic work touching on these issues has already been undertaken. In the 1930's, after the depression, the increasing poverty of South African cities stimulated an academic interest in the problems of urbanization. An important product of the spate of academic work that followed was Ellen Hellman's study of life in a slumyard in Doornfontein in the early 1930's - Rooiyard: A Sociological Study of an Urban Native Slum.² My thesis draws extensively on the extremely valuable empirical material presented in Hellman's work. However much of her interpretation is coloured by a dominant liberal concern at the time for the "problems" and "difficulties" involved in african adaptations from "traditional" society to "western" urban conditions. This thesis uses a different analytical framework. It attempts to show that black responses to urban conditions were rational and often ingenious forms of coping with a new environment rather than awkward attempts to adapt from a conservative precolonial culture to a new western life style. The thesis also attempts to situate the responses of the black working classes in Johannesburg to their urban environment within a more historical and materialist context. This is done by looking at the forces that went into the growth of the slumyards and which accounted, two decades later, for the destruction of the slums and the way of life that had grown up in them. Another aspect of the thesis, that differs from Hellman's work is its use of oral testimony to present the experience of life in the slums through the words of people who lived in them.

The thesis also attempts to provide an explanation of urban segregation in Johannesburg in the 1930's that is rooted in a historical materialist approach. Here a range of recent Marxist theoretical works on urbanization have been used to gain insight into the class forces that gave shape to the city of Johannesburg in the inter war years. The thesis especially looks at the way in which the stubborn determination of the working classes to remain in the slums opened up a series of conflicts and tensions within the town's ruling classes that delayed the implementation of segregation and allowed the culture of the slumyards to grow and thrive. The thesis argues that intra ruling class conflict over who was to pay for the control of the black urban working classes was a crucial factor in this delay in urban segregation. It was only when more financial resources became available during the post depression economic boom that these contradictions were resolved and segregation effectively implemented.

This interpretation is based upon and ~~represents~~ upon ideas that were developed by Paul Rich and Andre Proctor in earlier works. The materialist emphasis of the thesis and of the above works thus depart from the liberal tradition that sees urban segregation primarily in terms of the parliamentary machinations of individual politicians who were motivated primarily by racial hostility. This kind of approach to urban segregation is best seen in the work of Rodney Davenport.⁴

David Coplan's work on the history of black music and entertainment in South Africa presented in his thesis, 'In Township Tonight! South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre', also provided useful background material for the sections of the thesis that deal with the recreational aspects of slumyard culture.⁵ My thesis however focusses specifically on slumyard culture in Johannesburg and employs a definition of culture that necessitates an examination of a wider network of social relationships - such as family structures and informal economic activities - as well as a close look at the wider class struggles that went into the making of the urban environment in which slumyard culture was formed and later destroyed.

Another important aspect of the thesis, not dealt with in existing literature on black urbanization in Johannesburg, is the role played by cultural activities in the reproduction of the black working classes. Many recent studies, such as those by Harold Wolpe and Dan O'Meara have examined the role played by the reserve economies in allowing the black working classes to reproduce themselves in the face of wages inadequate to their subsistence needs.⁶ The decline of the productive capacity of the reserve economies is seen by these writers as a major reason for the growth of

urban militancy and the emergence of the repressive Apartheid state in the 1940's. My thesis however, attempts to show that the cultural activities of the urban working classes were as important as the reserve economies in subsidizing the wages of the black working classes and in maintaining the unemployed and marginalized classes in the towns. This had important effects on the political outlook and behaviour of these classes and it is argued that the disintegration of slumyard culture is a major factor to be considered in any explanation of the popular struggles in Johannesburg to which the Apartheid state was a response.

The examination of the role that the disintegration of slumyard culture played in politicizing the black urban population of Johannesburg, in the thesis, is intended as a supplement to the otherwise thorough analyses of popular struggles in the forties presented by Alf Stadler and David Harris.⁷

Chapter one of the thesis is a theoretical chapter which attempts to arrive at a working definition of culture and looks at the theoretical debates that exist around the nature of the relationship between, class formation, class struggle and culture. Chapter two is an examination of the forces that went into the making of the slumyards and the nature of popular and state responses to the urban problems created by the slums in the period before 1923. Chapters three and four are the central chapters of the thesis. Chapter three examines the various components of slumyard culture in the period between 1923 and the mid thirties - the date when the slumyards and their culture were destroyed by urban segregation. Chapter four deals with the relationship between slumyard culture and black political organization in Johannesburg in the same period. Chapter five examines the responses of the dominant classes in the city to the slum question, the nature of state and local state interventions into the slums and the eventual removal of the slums in the mid 1930's. Finally chapter six looks at the effects of the destruction of slumyard culture and the influence of this on mass based political action in Johannesburg in the 1940's.

Before moving on to chapter one, mention must be made here of my indebtedness to Modikwe Dikobe, whose friendship, patience and endless supply of information about life in the slums of Doornfontein provided me with much of the information and motivation that made this thesis possible. I am also deeply grateful to Wilson 'King Force' Silgee, the late Jacob Moeketsi, Ernest 'Palm' Mochumi, Peter Rezant, Mrs. Cele, Schreiner Baduza and the late Selby Msimang for the generous hours they gave in providing me with information necessary for this thesis. I only hope that my use of their words does not completely crudify and distort the complexity, richness and subtlety of the history they lived and helped make.

I would also like to thank Phillip Bonner for supervising my work so thoroughly and for providing many of the ideas that went into the writing of the thesis. Thanks also to Kelwyn Sole, Peter Wilkinson and David Webster for their comments and advice on different sections of the thesis. I also acknowledge the financial assistance given to me by the University of the Witwatersrand, the Human Sciences Research Council and the Stella Lowenstein Trust Fund during the course of my studies. Mrs. Duncan did a thorough and patient typing job. Thanks also to Adie, Ronny and Rob whose friendship - and stimulating discussions about British war comics helped to relieve the loneliness and frustration of academic work.

My mother and father helped with so many of my little problems during the course of this thesis and my mother typed many of the draft chapters for me.

Judy and Joanne also gave up their time to help with the proofreading.

Finally to Tina - thanks for caring so much. Without you this thesis would never have seen the light of day.

FOOTNOTES TO THE PREFACE

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CHAPTER 1CULTURE, IDEOLOGY AND CLASS STRUGGLE - A THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION

"It must be stressed that 'pure' spontaneity does not exist in history, it would come to the same thing as 'pure' mechanistic. In the 'most spontaneous movement' it is simply the case that the elements of 'conscious leadership', cannot be checked, have left no reliable documents. It may be said that spontaneity is therefore characteristic of the history of the subaltern classes and indeed of their most marginal and peripheral elements."

Antonio Gramsci 1932

Selections From the Prison Notebooks p. 196.

Before going on to examine the growth of slumyards in Johannesburg and the culture that they spawned it is useful to first present an outline of the theory and concepts that were used and developing during the course of researching and exploring the culture of the slumyards. This is the purpose of this chapter.

Firstly the chapter attempts to arrive at a working definition of "culture" - a term that is notoriously vague and slippery. Other concepts that are used frequently in the thesis, such as "objective conditions", "subjective responses" and the relation of "determination" between the two are also outlined in this section. Secondly this chapter looks at the relationship between culture and class & at the role that cultural forces play in the dual process whereby classes make themselves as much as they are made by outside forces.

The third section of the chapter shows how and why culture becomes an important site of struggle between the state, capital and labour. This section introduces the concept of "reproduction of labour power" as a means of examining concrete examples of this struggle. It also attempts to clarify the distinction between the concept of "ideology", which refers to the processes whereby a dominant class attempts to shape the activities and outlook of the dominated classes in its own interests, and the term "culture", which refers to the activities and values that are actually lived and adhered to by people. Here it is argued that there is the possibility for much historical variation in the relationship between the ideology of the dominant classes and the culture of the working classes. The term "hegemony" is introduced as a means of exploring the subtle distinctions and interplay between the two concepts.

The fourth section looks at the culture that is lived by the working classes and the pressures that this culture exerts and the limits that it imposes on the kinds

of formal political organization that is possible in any historical situation. Finally the chapter ends with a brief look at the value of oral history as a means of exploring and recovering the cultural activities and values of previous years and an examination of the problems associated with this kind of research. A brief assessment of the methods used in the thesis to utilize the value of oral history and to take into account its problems, forms a more practical conclusion to the chapter.

I. DEFINITIONS

a) Culture

The term 'culture' is notoriously vague and carries with it a wide range of meanings. One reason for this is that the word has a long history and has undergone a series of changes in meaning and use. Raymond Williams argues that any attempt at comprehending and defining the term must take into account this historical dimension.¹

Until the eighteenth century the word was used as a noun of process - the culture of crops, the culture of animals, the culture of minds. Late in the eighteenth century the term became virtually synonymous with civilization - a noun to describe a society's historical achievement of development and progress. Today the term is still used with this moral connotation. The nineteenth century saw a divergence of "culture" and "civilization". With the emergence of the romantic movement in this century and its criticism of "civilization" as artificial and alienating the term "culture" was used to refer to the process of inner spiritual or aesthetic development and to distinguish this process from the outer trappings of civilization. From this use the concept was extended to cover a general classification of "the arts" religion and all other products of specialized creative and aesthetic activity. This is the most widespread use of the term today. However the word underwent another transformation in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. During the enlightenment it became closely linked to the idea of confidence in man's ability to understand and create his own social institutions - the notion of "man making his own history." The romantic disillusionment with civilization did not abandon this meaning altogether. Rather it was argued that "culture" could not be used to refer simply to an advanced state of progress embodied in a single "European civilization." The value of social practices and institutions that made up the way of life of different peoples and nations was recognized in the romantic reaction to European civilization and it became necessary to speak of different "cultures" rather than a single "culture". In this sense the term began to lose its connotation of moral superiority.²

The complexity of the concept is evident - especially when it is realized that today the term retains almost all of these historical variations in meaning. However this complexity, argues Williams, is also a source of the strength of the concept. Because of its broad range of meaning, the use of the term exerts a pressure against simple and mechanical divisions of society into "economics", "politics" and "ideology". Its use also forces a consideration of the processes whereby these areas of social life are interlinked with each other.

The starting point of the definition used in this thesis is that the concept culture must not be restricted to the narrow range of products of aesthetic and intellectual work. Books, philosophy and painting are merely the specialized products of that general social activity whereby all men and women give creative expression to the material conditions that surround them. In this sense "culture" can be broadened to refer to the way in which social groups "handle" their experience of living in a set of objective conditions. The concept refers to the way in which people organize their daily lives in order to survive within a specific material environment and to the creation of a corresponding set of values, symbols, attitudes and mores.

Antonio Gramsci makes this first point about "culture" more eloquently:

"There is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded ... Each man finally outside his professional activity carries on some form of intellectual activity, that is, he is a "philosopher", an artist, a man of taste, he participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought."³
(My emphasis)

Gramsci insists that it is impossible to separate practical human activity from human consciousness. From his notion of intellectual activity "it follows that the majority of mankind are philosophers in so far as they engage in practical activity and in their practical activity (or in their guiding lines of conduct) there is implicitly contained a conception of the world, a philosophy".⁴

This way of seeing culture denies any sharp distinction between the subjective conditions in which men and women live and their subjective responses to these conditions or, in another formulation, between the material base of society and its ideological superstructure.

There are two more factors that emerge out of Gramsci's concept of culture that make it even more difficult to draw a line of division between the base and the

superstructure, or being and consciousness.

Firstly when ways of seeing the world come to be widely accepted as the norm and when people live their lives according to these values and mores, culture begins to assume the nature of an objective material force itself. In other words when an understanding of the world is "diffused in such a way as to convert itself into an active norm of conduct",⁵ the result is the "fanatical granite compactness of the 'popular beliefs' which assume the same energy as 'material forces'".⁶

The second and related point is that subjective responses to material conditions are not passive reflections which people make reflexively after they experience their material conditions. Rather consciousness often "thrusts back into being in its turn" thus remoulding the material conditions which originally gave rise to it.⁷ Both these points will, as we shall see exert a strong pressure against mechanical and static conceptions of the relationship between "being" and "consciousness".

However at this stage it is necessary to move in the other direction and impose a control on this expanded concept of culture. Defined in this way the concept tends to refer broadly to a people's "whole way of life." For the concept to be of any use it is important to make clear the distinction between that which is culture and that which is not culture. Here the crucial question is to define more precisely what is meant by objective conditions, how these differ from the culture which is created in response to them (but which also, in turn, plays a part in changing these objective conditions) and how the two sets of phenomena relate to each other.

Basically this involves an examination of the relationship between being and consciousness or from another angle it involves examining what is meant by the famous notion of base and superstructure. Much controversy surrounds the various attempts to conceptualize this relationship. Space and my own ability does not allow for an extensive detour into this complex, and still unresolved debate. A brief outline is presented here.

b) Objective Conditions, Subjective Responses and Determination

The term "objective conditions" has been and will be used frequently throughout this thesis. It is important to be clear on what we mean by the term.

Most frequently it is the system of material production - the combination of forces and relations of production that together constitute the mode of production - that

is referred to by the term "objective conditions". The insistence that men and women work and live in material limits that are not of their making is made in Engels' often quoted letter to Bloch:

"We make history ourselves, but, in the first place, under very definite assumptions and conditions."⁸

And Marx gives an idea of what is meant by these "definite conditions";

"In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will ... a definite stage of development."⁹

The relationships of ownership or dispossession to the means of production (land, factories, tools) that develop historically in any given social formation, and the social relationships of power, antagonism and struggle that the particular system of ownership relations gives rise to, form an aspect of the material reality which lies outside of culture.¹⁰ However the term "objective conditions" refers to more than this. It also refers to the physical and ecological surroundings in which men and women find themselves at any given particular time. The shape and nature of these surroundings are often linked, in complex ways, to the pattern of productive and social relations that have developed within any society. Some attempt to examine these linkages is made later in this chapter.

However given our preliminary definition of culture the problems with this distinction between culture and not culture are immediately apparent. It has been argued that popular beliefs and ways of seeing the world can at times acquire the solidity of material forces. These conceptions of the world are simultaneously linked to institutionalized forms of social organization and human practices that themselves become material forces. And as people perceive the "objective conditions" surrounding them they act on them thus giving rise to changes in the physical surroundings, institutional patterns of practical activity and social relationships in which they live. These factors make it extremely difficult to draw an arbitrary line between a material environment and the cultural responses to it. Even the ecological environment is not a:

"thing given direct from all eternity, remaining ever the same, but the product of industry and the state of society; and indeed it is an historical product, the result of activity of a whole succession of generations, each standing on the shoulders of the preceding one, developing its industry and its intercourse modifying its social system according to the changing needs."¹¹ (My Emphasis)

It is in this historical sense that "objective conditions" are used here. The conditions which men, at any particular point of time are born into or thrust into by

other social processes (e.g. proletarianization) that they are the cumulative result of the same generations and periods. They confront individuals in time and place as an already constituted reality but they are always being transformed. Seen in this way, they do not exist outside of cultural responses to them and are shaped by cultural initiatives.

It is often said that objective conditions determine "the base determines the superstructure". However, the relationship between the objective and the superstructure - does not fit easily with the notion of an objective base controlling the outcome of the human will or agency. Given this historical nuance, it would be more appropriate to give the term determination a more flexible meaning. Williams argues that it is more flexible to use a set of phenomena setting limits and exerting pressures on phenomena without predetermining the outcome of them. Objective conditions can be said to determine culture in the range of human responses that are possible and the influence on people who share these conditions to respond in an (often collective) way.

At this level, however, our notions of culture are too abstract. They need to be made more specific and concrete for "a conjoint exploration of the objective and subjective forces that go into the formation of the labour force by the Industrial Revolution, and the emergence of class culture in response to it."¹³

One way of making the concepts more concrete is to explore how they interact with the objective forces that go into the formation of the labour force and the emergence of a capitalist mode of production.

21. CULTURE AND CLASS FORMATION

a) Codetermination of Class

The forces that go into the underdevelopment of the

tion process are some of the important objective factors in class societies. However people who are subjected to the process are active agents in the process. They are able, through their consciousness, to alter the making of class. In E.P. Thompson's words:

"at the intersection of determination and creative agency the working class 'made itself as much as it was made'. We cannot put 'class' here and 'class' there as two separate entities, the one the other, since both must be taken together."

Or in Thompson's other famous phrase:

"The working class did not arise like a new nation at an appointed time. It was present at its birth."

This formulation of the codetermination of class and culture is central to the thesis. The argument, developed by Thompson, has however, been subjected to criticism. These criticisms hinge around Thompson's use of the term 'class' where it refers to the coherent self awareness and interests and antagonism to other classes. If classes can and do exist without acquiring these characteristics, the criticisms cannot be dealt with in detail here.

It must suffice to say that Thompson's thesis is not to be reinstated if we see the creative agency of the working class as a coherent awareness by a class of and for itself that has rarely emerged spontaneously in history. The spontaneous cultural responses of the working class in encounter living under capital. Thompson does attribute to social change. Here for Thompson the consciousness of a class is shaped by a range of:

"kinship, custom, the invisible and visible forms of social regulation, hegemony and domination, forms of domination and of resistance, religious faith and millenarian impulses, mass organizations and institutions and ideologies."¹⁷

All of these forms of spontaneous class response contribute to the awareness by a class of its common interests and identity. They do however, have a crucial influence on the process and hence on the objective pattern of social interaction that characterize a particular class.

Despite their lack of coherence these wider cultural responses; e.g. norms, values, familial and kinship obligations, relations of mutual assistance etc.; do have a determining effect on the objective pattern of relations to the means of production that they are a response to.

For example it has been demonstrated that the specific pattern of ownership relations that developed in Southern Africa was partially determined by the ability of indigenous rural producers to retain some possession and ownership of their rural means of production. This ability stemmed from the tenacious struggles of these people to retain access to their land and to protect their institutions of kinship and social welfare. According to Shula Marks and Richard Rathbone

"... in the case of the Tsonga, and it is true for all the societies of Southern Africa, kinship and kinship ideology was not merely 'superstructure' but actively entered into and structured relations of production."¹⁸

Thus the spontaneous cultural responses of a class do thrust back into and modify the material conditions that gave rise to that class - and the argument that maintains that the working class "made itself as much as it was made" retains its validity.

b) Is Culture Always Class Based? - The Collective Class Experience of Material Conditions.

Until now it has been assumed that cultural responses always assume a class nature. This assumption is problematic. Frequently the correspondence between a specific class and a particular set of cultural characteristics is assumed rather than explained. For example Jefferson and Hail state:

"In modern societies, the most fundamental groups are the social classes, and the major cultural configurations, will be, in a fundamental though often mediated way, 'class cultures'.¹⁹

This assertion of a simple correspondence between a specific class and a particular cultural configuration contains inherent problems. It does not explain the specific processes involved in the germination of a class culture out of the objective conditions upon which it is based. It also assumes that a cultural system will always have a distinct class base and thus does not account for situations in which different classes in society came to share the same culture.

E.P. Thompson does have something of an answer to these questions. He argues that it is through the crucial concept of "experience" that a class culture is generated out of people's common conditions of existence. Experience is for him

the driving force which, "lying half within social being, half within social consciousness", makes the "junction between culture and not culture." Experience is able to join social being and social consciousness because it involves people both living within material conditions (lived experience) and subjectively reflecting back upon these conditions (perceived experience).²⁰ And this experience results in the creation of cultural formations along class lines because:

"experience has, in the last instance, been generated in material life, has been structured in class ways, and hence 'social being' has determined 'social consciousness'."²¹

However there is an important step missing in Thompson's argument. Nowhere does he explain and expand on how "in the last instance" material conditions and experience of them are structured along class lines.

Some general tendencies in the way in which the urban environment is structured under capitalism along class lines can be observed. For example, the separation of the home from the workplace is a basic feature of the way in which space is organized under capitalism. Overcrowding and the absence of basic health and sanitation services are characteristic of most early capitalist cities. Thus it is possible to argue that generally the growth of capitalism tends to create conditions that thrust people together into a new and shared environment outside the workplace - and that this tendency lends itself to the creation of a new working class culture in the urban communities that are created during the course of proletarianization.

However, these tendencies are offset by a range of other factors which operate to give a specific shape to the urban environment and to the class nature of the communities that live in this environment - and these factors are crucial in influencing the class nature of cultural responses there. A closer examination of the processes whereby the material conditions of life are shaped under capitalism is therefore needed before the material base of a culture can be clearly identified. Additional concepts and tools for research are needed to rectify the abstract and static nature of Thompson's suggestion that material conditions are always structured in class ways and thus that experience always generates a class culture.

Recent Marxist work in urban sociology can be used to fill this gap and to examine the specific ways in which the shape of the urban physical environment is determined under capitalism by pressures emanating from the existing relations and forces of production. Some of this work is examined in Chapter 2. However it is useful, briefly to consider the ways in which this work can be used to deepen our under-

standing of the relationship between culture and class.

The process of proletarianization and the growth of capitalism involves the concentration of the means of production and the concentration of labour power within a limited physical area. Consequently this process also involves the concentration of resources, goods and services needed for the physical survival and the reproduction of labour power in the city. These socially necessary goods and services - housing, transport, schools, recreational facilities and health services etc. - are important in moulding the material and physical shape of the city in which daily life takes place. The extent to which these material supports for the reproduction of labour are provided and the way in which they are distributed amongst different classes depends on a range of specific and historically varying factors.²²

These include the tradition and extent of working class demands for these material goods, the ability of capital to provide them, conflicts between capital and labour and conflict within the capitalist classes over the financing of the urban built environment, the class composition of the city, the specific manner of state intervention to ensure that the material conditions for the reproduction of labour exist, the attempts by the working classes to create their own material means of survival and not least of all the attempts by urban planners and "social engineers" to use the provision of collective goods like housing, education and transport to contain class conflict. These will all have significant effects on the way which the material "equipment of daily life" is structured and allocated amongst different classes in the city.²³

Even a brief examination of these factors quickly dispels any notion that the material conditions of life are always structured along class lines. In fact some writers suggest that the opposite in fact applies. Castells argues that, under capitalism, the collective services, like housing, transport, health facilities etc., which form the environment in which daily life takes place are shared by all classes living in the city. He then goes on to argue that problems and inadequacies in the provision of these services tend to lead to an alliance of different classes in their response to these commonly felt urban problems.²⁴

Neither of these two opposing positions are capable of dealing with all concrete situations. The question of whether the material conditions of life are structured and experienced along class lines, or whether they are lived and shared by a number of different classes, cannot be answered in any timeless or a priori manner. Rather this question is a matter for historical investigation into the interaction between

the variables mentioned above, as well as others, which will always combine to create varying patterns in the way in which the material conditions of life are experienced along shared or different lines by different classes.

This specific pattern in the class experience of objective conditions will in turn play an important role in determining whether the integrated set of practices and conceptions, that we have defined as culture, takes the shape of different class cultures - working class culture, petty bourgeois culture, lumpen proletarian culture etc. - or whether some of these classes develop a common popular culture on the basis of their shared experience of material life.

However the specific structuring of these material conditions is not the only process that shapes the class nature of culture. This is because in class society culture tends to become the site of struggle - a struggle in which the dominant classes attempt to shape and incorporate the culture of the working classes in the interests of maintaining their class rule.

3) CULTURE AS A SITE OF STRUGGLE

The struggle over culture in capitalist society can be seen as having two related aspects - the material world in which the physical reproduction of labour takes place and the subjective level where peoples' attitudes towards their society are formed.

a) Reproduction and Cultural Struggle

We have already mentioned that capital has an interest in the physical conditions in which its workforce lives and in the way in which the working classes organize their lives in order to subsist and survive in their environment. The nature of the physical surroundings and of working class attempts to comprehend and cope with these, which form the bedrock of working class culture, has crucial implications for the physical health of workers, their productivity at work and their preparedness to continue working for capital under these conditions. Thus it is reasonable to expect that capital will, directly or through the agency of the state and other public bodies, attempt to influence and transform the cultural conditions of labour.

Richard Johnson notes that, "it is a matter of historical record that working class culture has been built around the task of making fundamentally punishing conditions more inhabitable" and that "capital does have certain requirements in relation to the reproduction of labour power" that are affected by these aspects of a working class making itself.

"From this viewpoint 'working class culture' is the form

in which labour is reproduced. In this respect capitalism is far from being a self-policing system; far from labour continually being reproduced in appropriate forms, these processes require continual management... This process of reproduction, then, is always a contested transformation. Working-class culture is formed in the struggle between capital's demand for particular forms of labour power and the search for a secure location within this relation of dependency by the working classes.²⁵

The outcome of this struggle will therefore determine the extent to which a working class or a popular culture exists separately from the values and world view of the bourgeoisie or whether it is subsumed under the dominant culture or ideology of that class.

To expand on this we must examine the second aspect of struggle over culture. Here we will discuss the concept of hegemony and how this can be used to make a distinction between ideology and culture.

b) Ideology, Culture and Hegemony

The subjective attitudes or "conceptions of the world" that accompany the practical responses of people to the way in which the conditions of life under capitalism are shaped can feed into the passivity or militancy of the politics of the exploited classes. (This will be expanded upon below). On this level culture is the site of a struggle by the dominant classes to win "the 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on life by the dominant fundamental group."²⁶

This area of cultural struggle brings us to the concept of ideology. It is a word that has come to acquire a number of meanings. Sometimes the word is used to refer to false or illusory knowledge, that dominates the minds of a social group, and is designed to mask the reality of class oppression from that group. This is often contrasted to scientific knowledge. At other times the word is used in a neutral sense to refer to the general social process of the production of meanings and ideas - and hence it encompasses "a transhistorical ever present concomitant of human existence. The medium in which men live their conditions of existence."²⁷ In a related usage the term ideology is often seen as a superstructural level of a social formation which is separate from but related to the base or mode of production.

1) Althusser's Concept of Ideology

At some points this expanded range of meanings overlap with the way in the concept of culture has been developed so far. For example Louis Althusser uses the concept ideology in general to refer to the medium in which men and women make sense

of their conditions of existence. This medium is "omnipresent, transhistorical and therefore immutable in form throughout the extent of history... ideology is eternal exactly like the unconscious."²⁸ So far this notion of ideology merely says that men and women will always represent their conditions of existence in their subjective consciousness - a notion very similar to that of "perceived experience" argued for by E.P. Thompson.

However this is where the similarity stops. For Althusser takes the argument a step further. He argues that:

"it is not their real conditions of existence, their real world that 'men' represent to themselves' in ideology, but above all it is their relation to these conditions of existence which is represented to them there"²⁹ (My emphasis)

And it is this relation which is at the centre of all illusory and distorted conceptions of the world that bolster class rule in capitalist society. This is because all representations of this relation of men to their real world involves a "necessarily imaginary distortion" of "not the existing relations of production (and the other relations that derive from them), but above all the (imaginary) relationship of individuals to the relations of production and the relations that derive from them".³⁰ For Althusser no direct cognition of the real conditions and relations of exploitation is possible by men and women. The experience of real life is the realm of perpetual illusion. It is this, rather than "false consciousness" or the deliberate and conspiratorial distortion of reality by a ruling class, which is the source of ideology. Ideology is the omnipresent misrecognition by people of their material world whereby "the relations between men and their conditions of existence is settled to the profit of the ruling class."³¹

A corollary of this notion of ideology is the rejection, by Althusser, of the notion of "Cogito" - the idea that men and women are capable of an accurate cognitive understanding of themselves and their surrounding objective conditions. This notion, says Althusser, involves too many assumptions about the nature of man. It is a naive anthropology which Althusser replaces with the idea that:

"the human subject is decentred, constituted by a structure which has no centre either, except in the imaginary misrecognition of the 'ego', i.e. in the ideological functions in which it recognises itself."³²

For Althusser, man does not create his own culture but is himself "constructed in the symbol."³³ Ideology has the "function" of defining for man, in an illusory and imaginary way, his nature and ability to make sense of and act upon the material conditions of the world in which he lives. "All ideology reifies or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects",³⁴ or put in another way it is the

symbols, rituals and illusory images of ideology that are influential in "the long forced march which makes mammiferous larvae into human children, masculine or feminine subjects."³⁵ Men and women, without the aid of scientific knowledge, are only capable of misrecognizing their place in the objective pattern of social relations. For Althusser "man is an ideological animal by nature."³⁶

Althusser attempts to explain how this function of ideology in general operates in concrete historical situations. To do this he distinguishes between the eternal functioning of ideology in general and the specific sites and conditions in which this functioning of ideology takes place.

Here he introduced the concept of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs). For him ideology does not function as an abstract set of ideas. Instead "an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices. This existence is material."³⁷ Moreover the imaginary and distorted consciousness which men have of their world governs their actions and material practices. These practices take place as ritualized patterns of behaviour within specific social institutions like the church, the family, a sporting club etc. Thus the imaginary consciousness of man is material for Althusser because:

"his ideas are his material actions inserted into material practices governed by material rituals which are themselves defined by the material ideological apparatus from which derive the ideas of that subject."³⁸

Althusser lists these ideological state apparatuses, in which the combination of human activity and consciousness is structured by ideology, as the educational system (public and private schools), the family, the legal system, the political system including political parties, trade unions, the media and what he calls "the cultural ISAs (Literature, the Arts, sports etc.)" He distinguishes between these ISAs and the repressive state apparatuses (RSAs). The ISAs are, he argues, a series of "distinct and specialized institutions" which function by ideology to reproduce the conditions necessary for the continued accumulation of capital. The RSAs on the other hand function predominantly by the use of force and violence to maintain these conditions for capital.

He recognizes that the ideological institutions are different to repressive apparatuses like the police and the army in that they often have a private character. However he insists that even private institutions like the family still function as apparatuses of the state. This is for two reasons. Firstly, for Althusser, the distinction between the public and the private is simply an illusory distinction internal to bourgeois law. Secondly

"If the ISAs 'function' massively and predominantly

by ideology, what unifies their diversity is precisely this functioning, insofar as the ideology by which they function is always in fact unified, despite its diversity and its contradictions, beneath the ruling ideology, which is the ideology of the ruling class."³⁹
(My emphasis)

ii) Critiques of Althusser's Concept of Ideology

The overlap between this notion of ideology and our notion of culture is apparent. This is often the source of much confusion. Althusser's notion of ideology refers precisely to that combination of subjective perceptions of the material world and the practical ways in which men and women organize themselves within their objective conditions which we defined as culture. However the differences between our notion of culture and Althusser's concept of ideology are also apparent. For Althusser both the lived and perceived experience of men and women is always the medium of ideological distortion. Men and women are "intexpellated" by ideology within the rituals of the family, school or church and this notion does not allow much scope for people to "thrust back into being" and create their own material institutions and conditions of life.⁴⁰ This impotence of human activity is reinforced by the fact that, for Althusser, the institutions in which this ideological creation of man takes place are always already dominated by the ideology of the ruling class. The possibility for the existence of different and conflicting class cultures is not allowed.⁴¹

Thus in Althusser's world the whole sphere in which men and women perceive and organize their lives in response to the conditions of existence under capitalism is subsumed under the function of ideology.

"Ideology in general - the natural culture bound state of man - is conflated with ideology in another of its meanings, the specific conditions of a cultural kind that prepare labourers and others for their place in the hierarchical division of labour."⁴²

Similarly the logic of Althusser's argument illegitimately extends the sphere of the state to all these institutions in which cultural practices occur. He thus obliterates important distinctions in the way in which these apparatuses or sites of cultural production operate. Trade unions, the family, schools and political parties do not always function to guarantee the reproduction of conditions needed for the continued expansion of capital. The creation of working class living conditions and popular responses to these do not always arrange themselves into a pattern that suits the needs of capital. Rather capital has to struggle against the initiatives of the working classes to achieve the results it desires. The reproduction of labour, is for Althusser a continuously achieved outcome rather than a process of struggle. His idea of ideology masks the degree of working

class initiative and struggle that go into the creation of these conditions and ignores the work that the state has to do "ceaselessly, actively, to hegemonize the corporative defensive institutions of the working class."⁴³ (My emphasis)

Given these weaknesses in Althusser's theory it is crucial not to confuse culture with the range of meanings that the term ideology acquires in his usage. This is especially important for any study attempting to examine the emergence of and relationship between different class cultures. This need, therefore, leads us to a consideration of alternative concepts which make the distinctions and the degree of overlap between ideology and culture more clear.

iii) Culture as opposition to Ideology

Thompson refuses to accept that experience is an imperfect and distorting medium which is always affected by ideological misrepresentations of the world. Instead he argues that lived experience cannot be "indefinitely diverted, postponed, falsified : suppressed by ideology" into producing an illusory consciousness of reality. Rather:

"Experience I [lived experience] is in eternal friction with imposed consciousness, and, as it breaks through, we, who fight in all the intricate vocabularies and disciplines of experience II [perceived experience], are given moments of openness and opportunity before the mould of ideology is imposed once more."⁴⁴

Similarly Simon Clarke insists that human experience - men and women living their relation to their means of existence-cannot always be shaped and structured by a ruling class ideology. He acknowledges that experience often generates a fragmented and imperfect consciousness and awareness of the conditions in which it occurs but:

"In resisting the differentiated forms of exploitation and oppression the working class gradually, but always incompletely and imperfectly, realizes a practical unity as workers begin to organize on a progressively wider basis. Thus the fragmentation of individual experience gives way to the unity of class consciousness to the extent that the fetishized fragmentation of experience is overcome practically in the course of struggle."⁴⁵

Moreover Clarke argues:

"Thus the emphasis on class culture... represents... an assertion of the permanent role of the struggle of the labouring classes in transforming exploitative and oppressive social relations in all their forms. Nor is culture a factor introduced from outside, for it is a central and inextinguishable dimension of the struggle, both as the way in which the struggle is experienced by its participants and as an object of struggle. Thus the struggle between class cultures is a central dimension of the struggle over the relations of production."⁴⁶

These arguments have considerable advantages over Althusser's notion of ideology. They make provision for the existence of different class cultures and for struggle to take place between these cultures. They also avoid the slides of meaning from lived experience to illusory consciousness - that take place in Althusser's theory of ideology. However they suffer from a weakness that is the reverse of Althusser's. While Althusser stresses the perpetual and remorseless structuring of human consciousness by ideology, Thompson and Clarke insist on a permanent tension between culture and ideology.

At this point in their arguments both writers, and especially Thompson, are uncharacteristically unhistorical in their assertions that experience is in "eternal friction" with ideology or that working class consciousness always "realizes a practical unity" in struggle.

The nature of the relationship between ideology and culture obviously varies much more than this in each particular set of concrete circumstances. Therefore what is needed is a set of concepts which are able to retain the distinctions between ideology and culture but are also able to capture the possible variations that can occur, historically, in the contested relationship between a culture, that is spontaneously generated by people from below, and an ideology, that is imposed in a systematic way on people from above. For these concepts we can turn, again, to Gramsci.

iv) Gramsci's Concepts of Common Sense, Philosophy and Hegemony

In a class divided society it is likely, we have argued, that there will be more than one cultural configuration at play. It has also been argued, moreover, that the dominant class, in order to bolster its rule over the other classes in society, may attempt to define and contain the culture of other classes within the practices and meanings of its own culture. In other words this class tries to represent its culture as the culture in society and to deny the existence of alternative or opposing cultures. This is a process of struggle which is by no means always successful in history. When, however, one culture does "gain ascendancy over the other, and when the subordinate culture experiences itself in terms prescribed by the dominant culture, then the dominant culture has also become the basis of a dominant ideology."⁴⁷

Gramsci makes this distinction more clearly and introduces an account of the historically varying ability of a dominant culture to incorporate other subordinate cultures. The concept of hegemony is crucial for the purpose of capturing the actual processes in which the relationship between culture and ideology varies

from time to time.

This concept refers to the process whereby class rule is entrenched by the intellectual domination of one class over all social classes in society. It refers to the way in which the principles of a dominant ideology are assimilated as common sense explanations of the world by the dominated classes. This method of legitimating class rule is not, however, something that inevitably happens for the benefit of the dominant classes.

"Common sense" explanations of the world are, as we have seen, generated spontaneously by the working classes, in the organization and planning of their everyday life. This "spontaneous" process of cognition and self making by a class is not, for Gramsci, the universe of perpetual illusion. This "common sense" or popular philosophy is, rather, deeply contradictory and combines a number of ideas, values, practices and rituals in "a more or less heterogenous and bizarre combination."⁴⁸ Popular culture is the "diffuse, uncoordinated features of a generic form of thought common to a particular period and a particular popular environment."⁴⁹

This lack of coherence is the defining feature which separates common sense or popular culture from ideology. The fragmented nature of popular culture is a result of its spontaneous growth out the practical activities of a group of people. These "feelings of the masses" are:

'Spontaneous in the sense that they are not the result of any systematic educational activity on the part of an already conscious leading group, but have been formed through everyday experience illuminated by 'common sense', i.e. by the traditional popular conception of the world - what is unimaginatively called instinct".⁵⁰

The "spontaneous philosophy" and organization of daily life can result in the emergence of a "corporate" consciousness, whereby the dominated classes seek to make the harsh conditions of existence under capital more habitable in a way that does not challenge the social relations which underpin those conditions. Alternatively "spontaneity" - which always involves popular organization and intellectual leadership - can become the basis of effective resistance to the incursions by capital and capital's attempts to shape and mould the conditions under which the daily life of labour takes place. Language for example can often be a means of

Ideology is distinguished from culture in Gramsci's work. The terms ideology and philosophy are often used synonymously to indicate this difference. However because all men are philosophers this "difference is not one of 'quality' but of 'quantity'... (of) greater degrees of 'homogeneity', 'coherence', 'logicality', etc."⁵² Some people do have the task in society of being professional intellectuals and "think with greater logical rigour, with greater coherence, with more systematic sense, than do other men".⁵³ Thus it is the more elaborate and coordinated sets of ideas and conceptions of the world for which Gramsci reserves the title of ideology or philosophy. These philosophies can be the result of individual mental activity and can exist in isolation as "arbitrary, rationalistic, or 'willed'" sets of ideas.⁵⁴

On the other hand, intellectuals emerge from among the ranks of the dominated classes, who develop explanations for the experiences of their class. These 'organic' intellectuals also lead and direct the 'spontaneous' and formal kind of organization that the members of their class need in order to cope with their daily conditions of life.⁵⁵ And in order to play this kind of leadership role these intellectuals must develop an explanation of reality that becomes "diffused among the many ... and diffused in such a way as to convert itself into an active norm of conduct."⁵⁶

Hegemony is a term that refers to the processes whereby the ideology of a dominant class attempts to impose some uniformity on the culture of the working classes. In this sense hegemony does not refer to the articulate upper level of "ideology" but to the way in which a "whole body of practices and expectations... a lived system of meanings and values" is organized to ensure the dominance and subordination of certain classes.⁵⁷ Thus when the ideology of a particular class has been able to incorporate, transform and contain the common sense views of other social classes it has become "hegemonic" and at that moment in history ideology and culture can be said to overlap. However this process of transforming the "spontaneous" activity and consciousness of the working class is a contested one, involving struggle and resistance by these classes. The outcome is by no means guaranteed and depends on the balance of forces at play in the struggle between classes on the field of culture. It is the historical outcome of this conflict, rather than an abstract and unvarying relationship between culture and ideology, that determines whether autonomous class cultures exist in opposition to a dominant ideology or whether these class cultures have become subsumed within one single dominant culture, which is then, and only then, a dominant ideology as well.⁵⁸

In reality between the two poles of: a) a class culture in total opposition to

ideology and b) the complete absorption of these into a single dominant ideology there is a more complex situation in which class cultures, because of their fragmented nature, exist both "within and beyond a specific and effective dominance" by ideology. In most historical situations there is a great deal of variation in "how far a dominant social order reaches into the whole range of practices and experiences in an attempt at incorporation."⁵⁹

c) Residual, Emergent, Alternative and Oppositional Cultures

At this stage it is important to point out that cognition does not arise automatically out of the raw conditions of experience. The apparent "spontaneity" of the process of cultural formation from below involves multiple levels of organizational work, leadership and intellectual activity. This intellectual activity also does not translate objective conditions into subjective explanations in a vacuum. The way this process occurs and the types of explanations of reality that emerge depend on the categories of thought and meaning that already exist. These may have emerged in previous material contexts and may be adapted and transferred to give meaning to a new material environment. It is in this sense that "Philosophy cannot be separated from the history of philosophy, nor can culture from the history of culture."⁶⁰ Or in Amilcar Cabral's words, "culture is simultaneously the fruits of a peoples history and a determinant of history."⁶¹ Because of this, every cultural formation may contain residual elements - practices and meanings which have been formed in the past - which continue to be used as an explanation of a new material situation and may act as a guide to activity and organization within the new situation. These residual cultural elements can form the basis of alternative or oppositional forms to the dominant culture.⁶² Often these meanings and values which were created in past situations still have significance because, "they represent areas of human experience, aspiration and achievement which the dominant culture neglects, undervalues, opposes, represses, or even cannot recognize."⁶³

It has also been argued that the process of proletarianization shapes a new environment which those deprived of their means of production are thrust into. These people however respond to these forces and in turn create 'new' and 'emergent' cultural forms in order to deal with the novel experience of living under capitalism.⁶⁴

It is possible for both residual and emergent cultural forms to exist without challenging the interests of the dominant classes - in fact sometimes they are not even noticed by these classes. The term 'alternative' can be used to describe these cultural forms.⁶⁵

However residual and emergent cultural forms can contain within them practices and values that threaten the reproduction of a suitable labour force for capital and rub against the ideology of the dominant classes. These are the cultural forms that can be called 'oppositional'. It is when these kinds of cultural forms are seen to be a threat by the dominant classes that "the process of attempted incorporation significantly begins."⁶⁶

However here the fragmented nature of culture as opposed to ideology must be stressed again. It is possible for a class culture, as it is historically lived and being transformed to contain an agglomeration of residual, emergent, alternative and oppositional elements. Thus a class culture might threaten the kinds of reproduction of labour required by capital and at the same time contain conceptions of the world that do not specifically challenge the values of a dominant ideology.⁶⁷ Simple generalizations about the political implications of working class or popular culture must as a result obviously be avoided.

4) Culture and Political Organization

However it is undoubtedly true that working class and popular culture does have some effect on the nature of the political organization of the dominated classes. E.P. Thompson, for example shows how the growth of a dense network of defensive mutuality within the personal lives of working people, at home and at work, institutionalized in the form of friendly societies, funeral societies and sick clubs, formed the basis for the development of trade unions, chartist organizations and political unions in England in the nineteenth century. In fact the constitutions of many emerging trade unions at this time were "more elaborate versions of the same code of conduct as the sick club."⁶⁸

However working class and popular culture do not always encourage militant forms of political organization. Under certain conditions this influence can be in the opposite direction. Gareth Stedman Jones, for example, shows that by the end of the nineteenth century the radicalism of the English working class, in London at least, had given way to "an enclosed and defensive conservatism."⁶⁹ The underlying reason for this, says Stedman Jones, was the growth of a popular culture which was strongly "impervious to middle class attempts to guide it" but remained defensive and uncombatative on a political level - an alternative rather than an oppositional culture.⁷⁰

To use Gramsci's terms, the direction in which the influence of culture will be exerted - towards a "corporate" consciousness which attempts to "defend and improve a position within a given social order" or towards a "hegemonic consciousness"

which "seeks to perform a transformative work over the whole range of society"⁷¹ - will depend on a range of objective and subjective factors. These factors include the specific nature of the material conditions that working class culture responds to, the traditions of political resistance, organization and alternative perceptions of the world that are available for the working classes to "handle" their experience with and the extent to which a dominant ideology is able to reach into and control the culture of the working classes.

It is clear that a working class or a popular culture can become the basis for the growth and organization of a counter hegemony - a set of political attitudes and practices capable of challenging the structures of oppression in class society. Certainly "spontaneous" culture will always exert a pressure and impose limits on the kinds of political organization and tactics that are possible in a given situation.⁷² These factors that influence the political effects of culture are always in a constant state of interaction and alternation. As the objective situation that gave rise to particular cultural responses changes so too does that culture change - creating new possibilities for and imposing new limitations on political organization. Clearly any examination of the political activities and organization of the working classes must involve a conjoint examination of leadership, tactics and methods of organizing and the network of cultural activities that shape the consciousness and behaviour of these classes. This is one of the important reasons why working class and popular culture have recently been seen as important areas of historical enquiry.

5) Culture and Oral History

Culture, defined in the above way, does not lend itself to the conventional techniques of historical enquiry. The way in which the working classes organize their daily lives very seldom leaves any written documentation. The "spontaneity", informality and deliberately impervious nature of these activities makes information about the culture of the working classes even more inaccessible. People's memories therefore provide the most valuable insights into the practical activities and values of everyday life. Also one of the great advantages of oral history is the way it can be used to remedy the fact that the upper classes tend to have a monopoly over the production of 'normal' historical sources and documents.

"Oral sources are therefore a necessary (if not sufficient) condition for a history of the non hegemonic classes, while they are less necessary for a history of the ruling classes who have had control over writing and therefore entrusted most of their collective memory to written records."⁷³

According to Luisa Passerini, "Oral history consists not just in factual statements, but is preeminently an expression and representation of culture, and

This makes the information obtained from interviews with people subject to the fallibility of memory and obviously demands that oral information be checked against the testimony of other people and other kinds of sources. However studies of human memory patterns have shown that memory tends to become more reliable when the events being remembered are further back in time.⁷⁷ Perhaps a more important feature of this long gap between the events and the recording of them orally is that memory can be influenced by layers of subsequent experiences and by the intrusion of outside ideological influences which can later alter the perceptions of and meanings given to a set of events.⁷⁸ The changing material conditions of a class and the mobility of individual people between classes over a period of time are especially important in making for these kinds of distortions in oral testimony. This danger, as much as the fallibility of memory, also necessitates the checking of oral sources against other sources of information. However this characteristic of oral history can be an advantage as well. It can be used as a guide to the processes of class mobility and the accompanying changes in people's consciousness that take place over time.

Oral testimony is in fact not primarily useful for accurate factual information. People's testimonies are more useful as a guide to the kinds of meaning that were given to objective conditions by groups of people. "The diversity of oral history consists in the fact that 'untrue' statements are still psychologically 'true', and that these previous 'errors' sometimes reveal more than factually accurate accounts" and it can thus tell us "not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, what they now think they did."⁷⁹

The second peculiar characteristic of oral history is its oral and audial nature. Interviews, unlike documents, have the advantage of conveying a sense of evasion, reluctance to talk of certain things, nuances of meaning, humour and other emotional responses. In this sense the silences and unanswered questions in oral interviews are very important. This has advantages of accuracy over written sources, which do not contain these guides to the way in which evidence is being arranged, selected or distorted. Because written sources are already finite and complete they can give "the illusion that since no modifications are possible in the future of the text, no modifications can have taken place in its past history."⁸⁰ Oral history on the other hand contains guides to the subjective interpretation of objective processes and events.

A third characteristic of oral history relates to the ambiguities of popular or working class culture that have already been discussed. While the collective struggle for daily survival and the common experience of the objective conditions

therefore includes not only literal narrations but also the dimensions of memory, ideology and subconscious desires".⁷⁴ She uses the term "subjectivity" to identify the sphere of history from which oral sources derive and refer to. She suggests that this term is broad enough to include the "spontaneous" aspects of a people's consciousness as well as the more formal and coherent forms of consciousness that come from an ideology implanted or imposed by intellectuals working outside the everyday experience of the classes involved.⁷⁵ This broad area to which oral history refers - a combination of factual information about everyday life, subjective insight into people's perceived experience of this material reality and an indication of the extent to which these activities and perceptions are shaped by a dominant or counter hegemony - ideology - is a source of both the advantages and disadvantages of oral history.

A common criticism of oral history refers precisely to this subjective nature of oral testimony and argues that oral sources lack the objectivity of written documents. In reply it has been pointed out that many of the conventional historical sources, such as census records, court records and marriage registrations, are merely written records of what were originally oral interviews and testimonies. Minutes of meetings or dictated letters are also records of oral discussions that are in fact most often less detailed than transcripts of an interview. Written memoirs refer to the same areas of subjectivity as do oral sources. These also often have a definite theme and audience in mind and therefore can involve a series of distortions or omissions. Similarly official documents, for example the report of a commission of enquiry, are often written specifically with the intention to influence official thinking or public opinion. Thus criticism of oral history as "subjective" often reflects "a superstitious prejudice in favour of the written over the spoken word." In fact all historical sources involve inaccuracy, distortions, deliberate omissions and subjective interpretations of events.⁷⁶

However there are real differences between oral and written sources which affect the way in which oral history can be used and these must therefore be taken into account.

a) The Value of Oral History

All recorded evidence is to some extent retrospective. There are a range of factors which intervene in the gap between the occurrence of an event or set of events and the act of recording these. These factors inevitably shape the interpretation and meaning that is given to events when they are recorded. With oral history the distinguishing characteristic in this respect is that peoples' reminiscences are usually retrospective over a long time span.

This makes the information obtained from interviews with people subject to the fallibility of memory and obviously demands that oral information be checked against the testimony of other people and other kinds of sources. However studies of human memory patterns have shown that memory tends to become more reliable when the events being remembered are further back in time.⁷⁷ Perhaps a more important feature of this long gap between the events and the recording of them orally is that memory can be influenced by layers of subsequent experiences and by the intrusion of outside ideological influences which can later alter the perceptions of and meanings given to a set of events.⁷⁸ The changing material conditions of a class and the mobility of individual people between classes over a period of time are especially important in making for these kinds of distortions in oral testimony. This danger, as much as the fallibility of memory, also necessitates the checking of oral sources against other sources of information. However this characteristic of oral history can be an advantage as well. It can be used as a guide to the processes of class mobility and the accompanying changes in people's consciousness that take place over time.

Oral testimony is in fact not primarily useful for accurate factual information. People's testimonies are more useful as a guide to the kinds of meaning that were given to objective conditions by groups of people. "The diversity of oral history consists in the fact that 'untrue' statements are still psychologically 'true', and that these previous 'errors' sometimes reveal more than factually accurate accounts" and it can thus tell us "not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, what they now think they did."⁷⁹

The second peculiar characteristic of oral history is its oral and audial nature. Interviews, unlike documents, have the advantage of conveying a sense of evasion, reluctance to talk of certain things, nuances of meaning, humour and other emotional responses. In this sense the silences and unanswered questions in oral inter-

of life will exert a pressure on members of a class to share a similar set of values and interpretations of the world this will never be a completely collective process. Experience of the same set of events can lead to a range of different individual responses - although the imperatives of social security, the pressures of conformity and the need for mutual assistance and collective action in order to survive will impose limits on the range of individual responses possible. Nevertheless oral evidence will always have an inherent incompleteness. The reminiscences of one or even a thousand people who belonged to a particular class will never add up to the collective consciousness or culture of that class and this fragmentary and incomplete nature of oral history must be accepted.⁸¹

Related to this is the obvious point that individual experience and reminiscence of it will almost always be localized and partial. While it can be a guide to the meaning that people gave to the objective processes they experienced it is not sufficient for an adequate exploration of both the objective and subjective factors that go into the making of a class. Other sources must still be relied upon in order to do this.

The fourth important characteristic of oral sources is that they are most often the result of a dialogue between the researcher and the informant. This kind of information only comes about as a result of the initiative of the researcher and the content of an interview often depends on the interviewer's input - "the questions, stimuli, dialogue, relations of trust or detachment etc.," that go into an interview.⁸²

Method

The oral interviews used in this thesis did not follow a fixed method. This is because an awareness of the problems and advantages of this kind of research was only developed in the course of the study. There was especially no attempt to interview a thoroughly representative sample of people who lived in the slumyards of Johannesburg. This is because of the problems of access to these people who have been scattered, by the processes of segregation and influx control, all over the townships of Johannesburg and the rural areas of the country. However some basic principles, related to the above points, have been kept in mind when interviewing people. Firstly I have attempted wherever possible to interview people two or more times. The first interview was intended as a free flowing narrative of the person's life history and direct questions were reduced to a minimum. The aim of this first interview was to, as far as possible, limit the influence of the researcher's presence on the content of the interview and to encourage a "spontaneous" recollection of experience. This first interview was designed to provide

guides to the changing attitudes and values of the person who was providing the information. Questions concerning detail and the specific areas of enquiry of the thesis, were saved, where possible for subsequent interviews.

Secondly most interviews were recorded on tape and only edited portions of the taped recording were transcribed. There were some exceptions to this. On some occasions equipment was not available for recording interviews and handwritten notes were taken of the interview. The status of Modikwe Dikobes "Research Notes" must also be raised here. These were written by him over an approximate period of two years. Some of these notes were written in response to questions asked by myself, some of them came out of discussions that took place during interviews and others were produced more or less "spontaneously". This source of information, therefore, is not strictly speaking oral testimony although it contains many of the qualities of oral history.

Oral interviews constitute the most important source of information for the chapter of this thesis that deals with popular culture in Johannesburg, in the inter war period. Before going on to look at this culture it is necessary to explain why it was that slumyards came to form the dominant milieu in which the working classes of Johannesburg experienced the conditions of living under capitalism. This is the subject of Chapter 2.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. R. Williams, Marxism and Literature, OUP, 1977, p. 11.
2. This outline is taken from R. Williams, Marxism and Literature, pp. 11 - 21, and R. Williams, Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society, Fontana, 1976, pp. 78 - 82.
3. A. Gramsci, Selections From the Prison Notebooks, Laurence and W. Law, 1971, p. 9.
4. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 344.
5. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 346.
6. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 404.
7. A point made by E.P. Thompson, The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays, London, 1978, p. 362.
8. Quoted in Williams, Marxism and Literature, p. 85.
9. K. Marx, Selected Works, Vol. I, p. 362 quoted in Williams, Marxism and Literature, p. 84.
10. There is no space here to consider the complex debate about whether the relations of production or the forces of production are primary in the creation of this pattern of objective social relations. Here it is assumed that it is the relations of production that have a key role to play in the structuring of a wider social system. Two key works which deal with this debate are:
G.A. Cohen, Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence, Clarendon Press, 1978.
A. Levine and E. Olin Wright, 'Rationality and Class Struggle', New Left Review, 123, 1980.
11. E. Meiksins Wood, 'The Separation of the Political and the Economic in Capitalism', New Left Review, 127, 1981, p. 79.
12. This meaning of 'determination' is taken from Williams, Marxism and Literature, pp. 81 - 89 and Keywords pp. 87 - 91.

13. P. Anderson, Arguments Within English Marxism, Verso, 1980, p. 32.

14. Thompson, Poverty of Theory, p. 298.

15. E.P. Thompson, The Making, p. 9.

16. Thompson in his early formulation of this concept of class formation did tend to see the self making of a class in terms of a restricted notion of class consciousness; 'And class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men.' By making consciousness depend on this kind of coherent awareness by a class of and for itself Thompson has opened himself up to some damning criticism.

Perry Anderson effectively demolishes his position by pointing out numerous examples where classes have existed in history without any collective consciousness of this kind. Class awareness of 'the identity of their interests' and of their antagonistic interests against other classes is, he argues, a rare occurrence in history. Consequently Anderson feels justified to reassert the primacy of class 'as an objective relation to means of production, independent of will or attitude.' (Anderson, Arguments, p. 40).

The same indictment is made by C.A. Cohen. It is precisely because members of a class need not be coherently conscious of their common conditions and interests that Marx introduced the concepts 'class in itself' as opposed to a 'class for itself' in the Eighteenth Brumaire. Cohen thus concludes that 'a person's class is established by nothing but his objective place in the network of ownership relations, however difficult it may be to identify such places neatly.' (Cohen, Theory of History pp. 73 - 77).

17. Thompson, Poverty of Theory, p. 362.

18. S. Marks and R. Rathbone (eds.), Industrialization and Social Change in South Africa: African Class Formation, Culture and Consciousness, 1870-1930, Longmans, 1982, p. 19.

19. S. Hall and T. Jefferson, Resistance Through Rituals, Hutchinson, 1975, p. 13.

20. E.P. Thompson, 'The Politics of Theory' in R. Samuel (ed.), People's History and Socialist Theory, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, p. 406.

21. Thompson, Poverty of Theory, p. 290.
22. There is a complex body of theory that deals with the questions raised here. This literature is examined in chapter two. Two of the key works are:
M. Castells, City, Class and Power, MacMillan, 1978.
J. Pickvance, Urban Sociology: Critical Essays, Tavistock Publications, 1976.
23. Castells, City, Class, p. 43.
24. See for example Castells, City, Class, p. 171.
'what characterises urban contradictions is that they concern all the popular classes ... the housing crisis extends itself far beyond the working class; the crisis in public transport concerns everyone who must make a daily journey to work; the lack of creches and nurseries affects all women; the social and functional segregation of space is beneficial only to the minute minority making up the power elite; pollution is itself also largely indivisible; and so on.'
25. R. Johnson, 'Three Problematics: Elements of a Theory of Working Class Culture' in J. Clarke, C. Critcher and R. Johnson. (eds.), Working Class Culture: Studies in History and Theory, Hutchinson, 1979, p. 237.
26. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 12.
27. Johnson, 'Three Problematics', p. 231.
28. L. Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' in Lenin and Philosophy, New Left Books, 1971, p. 152.
29. Althusser, Lenin, p. 154.
30. Althusser, Lenin, p. 155.
31. L. Althusser, For Marx, New Left Books, 1967, p. 236.
32. L. Althusser, 'Freud and Lacan' in Althusser, Lenin, quoted by R. McDonnell and K. Robins, 'Marxist Cultural Theory' the Althusserian Smokescreen in S. Clarke (ed.), One Dimensional Marxism, Allison and Busby, 1980, p. 198.
33. Althusser, 'Freud and Lacan', p. 204.

38. Althusser, 'Ideology', p. 139.

40. Thompson, Poverty of Theory, p. 290.

41. A year after writing this original article on ideological Althusser apparently became aware of the conservative implication of his argument. He thus added a qualifying postscript. There he writes, that class struggle in fact takes place within the framework of this different ideologies exist in a social formation and are not 'the conflict free realization of the ideology of the ruling class' or of ideology in general. Althusser, 'Ideology', p. 172.

It is difficult to see how the simple and untheorized statement that ideology has a 'qualifying' function can coexist with Althusser's earlier argument that ideology has a universally distorting function that ideology in general has a distorting function and the structural unity of the ideological apparatus of the ruling classes. The points made in the postscript are qualifications of his argument. Rather they demand a new account of the nature of ideology and the specific sites within society in which it is formed.

Thus it has been argued with regard to Althusser's notion of ideology in general and the way in which it 'interpellates' individual human subjects that 'any ideology must be a dominant ideology and the possibility of the existence of any ideology of the dominant class'. E. Laclau, Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory, New York, 1977, p. 101, FN. 32.

And the following quotation raises the implications of Althusser's ideology in general for our concept of class agency.

'A class in struggle is a class subject, as we who struggle. While Althusser theorises on a constituted individual subject, his theory leaves no more room for a constituting collective subject than it does for the constituting ego ... Either there are no constituting subjects, individual or collective, and we may as well let history and class struggle take their course or there are real possibilities of conscious intervention of through organized political action.' T. Lovell, 'The Social Relations of Cultural Production' in S. Clarke (ed.), One Dimension, pp. 241 - 242.

42. Johnson, 'Three Problematics', p. 229.
43. S. Hall, B. Laundy and G. McLennan, 'Politics and Ideology in Gramsci', in On Ideology, Centre For Contemporary Cultural Studies, Hutchinson, 1977, p. 47.
44. Thompson, Poverty of Theory, p. 406.
45. S. Clarke, 'Socialist Humanism and the Critique of Economism', History Workshop, No. 8, 1979, pp. 152 - 153.
46. Clarke, 'Socialist Humanism', p. 150.
47. Hall and Jefferson, Resistance, Rituals, p. 12.
48. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 338.
49. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 330.
50. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, pp. 198 - 199.
51. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 323.
52. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 347.
53. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 347.
54. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 377.
55. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 5.
56. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 346.

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42. Johnson, 'Three Problematics', p. 229.
43. S. Hall, B. Lumley and G. McLennan, 'Politics and Ideology in Gramsci', in On Ideology, Centre For Contemporary Cultural Studies, Hutchinson, 1977, p. 47.
44. Thompson, Poverty of Theory, p. 406.
45. S. Clarke, 'Socialist Humanism and the Critique of Economism', History Workshop, No. 8, 1979, pp. 152 - 153.
46. Clarke, 'Socialist Humanism', p. 150.
47. Hall and Jefferson, Resistance, Rituals, p. 12.
48. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 338.
49. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 330.
50. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, pp. 198 - 199.
51. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 323.
52. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 347.
53. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 347.
54. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 377.
55. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 5.
56. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 346.

57. Williams, Marxism and Literature, pp. 108 & 114.
58. See Johnson, 'Three Problematics' pp. 233 - 236 and R. Johnson, 'Histories of Culture/Theories of Ideology: Notes on an Impasse' in M. Barrett, Ideology and Cultural Production, pp. 73 - 74 for a useful employment of these concepts to distinguish between culture and ideology.
59. Williams, Marxism and Literature, p. 121 and p. 125.
60. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 324.
61. A. Cabral, 'National Culture', in Unity and Struggle, Heinemann, 1980, p. 141.
62. Williams, Marxism and Literature, p. 122.
63. Williams, Marxism and Literature, p. 124.
64. Williams, Marxism and Literature, p. 124.
65. Williams, Marxism and Literature, p. 125.
66. Williams, Marxism and Literature, p. 124.
67. Belinda Bozzolli makes use of these notions of emergent, residual, oppositional and alternative cultural elements in her discussion of forms of South African class cultures in an introduction to a set of essays edited by her:
B. Bozzolli, 'History, Experience and Culture', Town and Countryside in the Transvaal, Ravan Press, 1983, pp. 22 - 28.
68. Thompson, The Making, p. 461.
69. G. Stedman Jones, 'Working Class Culture and Working Class Politics in London 1870 - 1900. Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class', Journal of Social

manner. The leaders themselves spoke of the spontaneity of the movement and rightly so. This assertion was a stimulus, a tonic, an element of unification and depth.

This statement was interesting parallels with Wilhelm Reich's explanation of the failure of the left to effectively challenge the rise of fascism in Germany:

'While we presented the masses with superb historical analyses and economic treatises on the contradictions of Imperialism. Hitler stirred the deepest roots of their emotional being. As Marx would have put it we left the praxis of the subjective factor to the idealists, we acted like mechanistic materialists.'

And he goes on to argue:

'We make and change the world not only through the mind of man but through his will for work, his longing for happiness, in brief through his psychological existence ... A global and political policy if it means to create and secure international socialism, must find a point of contact with trivial, banal, primitive, simple, everyday life ...'

Both quotations are taken from C. Boggs, Gramsci's Marxism, Pluto Press, 1976, p.57.

73. H. Portelli, 'The Peculiarities of Oral History', History Workshop, No. 12, 1981, p. 101.
74. L. Passerini, 'Work, Ideology and Consensus under Italian Fascism', History Workshop, No. 6, 1979, p. 84.
75. Passerini, 'Work, Ideology', p. 85.

76. P. Thompson, Oral History: The Voice of the Past, OUP, 1978, p. 98.
See also chapter four of this book which deals with the subjective nature
of oral history and other sources in more detail.
77. Thompson, Oral History, p. 50.
78. This point is made by Thompson, Oral History, p. 100 and History Workshop,
Editorial, No. 8, 1979, p. 111.
79. Thompson, Oral History, p. 100.
80. Portelli, 'Peculiarities ... Oral History', p. 101.
81. Portelli, 'Peculiarities ... Oral History', p. 104.
82. Portelli, 'Peculiarities ... Oral History', p. 103.

CHAPTER 2

THE ORIGINS OF SLUMYARDS IN JOHANNESBURG 1900 - 1923

In the last chapter it was argued that the nature of the culture of the working class depends largely on the ways in which the material conditions of urban life are shaped by the objective forces of capitalist development and the ways in which these conditions are distributed amongst the different classes living in the city.

One of the most distinctive features of Johannesburg's "built" environment, in the inter-war years, was the existence of a large belt of slums that spread from the western suburbs across the city centre to the suburbs in the east. These slums were the major form of housing for the black working classes employed outside of the mining sector of Johannesburg's economy. This was commented upon by the Unemployment Commission of 1922 when it reported that there was:

"now a considerable population of pure bred natives permanently resident in the towns of the Union. These people have no other home and many of their children were born in the town and have grown up ignorant of old tribal life. Some of these live in locations but in Johannesburg they live scattered through the poorer parts of town side by side with whites."¹

By this time slums were nothing new in Johannesburg. Already in the post Anglo-Boer war period housing conditions were bad enough for the Milner Administration to set up the Insanitary Areas Commission to look into ways of ridding the town centre of its slums. But during and after the First World War they expanded at such a rate and conditions deteriorated to a point where one report labelled them as the worst in the world.²

These slums are a crucial feature in the history of Johannesburg's black working class. It was here that the newly urbanized black proletariat forged a new lifestyle and a distinctive identity for itself, it was here that this class together with the unemployed devised a range of activities that enabled them to survive in the harsh environment of the town and it was here that the newly urbanized african classes developed formal and informal methods of resisting state attempts to block the influx of rural africans into the town and to evict all 'surplus' and unemployed africans from the town. The slums were thus a crucial part of the material environment that went into the making of the culture of Johannesburg's black working class.

experienced. This chapter is an attempt to do this as a prelude to examining the nature of slumyard culture. It looks at the reasons for the rapid growth of slums between 1910 and 1923 in terms of the contradictions that existed within the town's dominant classes over housing policy, attempts by the local state to solve the problems caused by these contradictions and popular responses to these state interventions. These were the forces that shaped the housing ecology of Johannesburg and ensured that the slums became the dominant form of accommodation for the town's working classes within the pattern of working class housing in the town and constituted an important part of the material environment in which these classes developed a culture and consciousness in the course of their struggle for survival.

This chapter is structured in the following ways. Firstly the creation of a substantial semi proletarianized working class requiring some form of family accommodation in town is examined. In this section the attitudes of these people to the various forms of housing provided in town and the reasons for them choosing slums as the kind of available housing most suited to their needs are outlined. Secondly the chapter points out that Johannesburg like most industrializing towns, "experienced a sharp contradiction between its commercial growth and the need to house its necessary workforce."³ The reasons for this contradiction are examined and are presented as a major explanation for the slums. Here the attitudes of the various economic sectors in the town towards the provision of housing for their workers are examined to explain why no alternative forms of working class housing were provided by capital. Thirdly and finally, in the absence of any attempts by capital to house their workers, the attempts by the state to meet the need for proper working class housing is examined. Here it is argued that conflicts between the central and local levels of the state and antagonisms within the local state made all attempts to solve the slum 'problem' before 1923 weak and ineffective - thus allowing the slums and the culture they spawned to proliferate in the twenties and thirties.

1. The Emergence of An Urban Proletariat and Its Response to Housing Conditions in Johannesburg before 1923.

a) Patterns of Underdevelopment

The principal factors causing the destruction of african rural economies and the creation of an urban proletariat in Southern Africa were the need for cheap labour on the diamond and gold mines and the competition to white capitalist agriculture that was provided by black farmers. A number of studies have pointed to the variety

minatory state assistance to farmers.⁴

It has also been shown that the process of proletarianization was both uneven and incomplete. Many african rural producers fanaciously retained possession of their land - in the meagre reserves set aside for them, on land that they purchased in 'white' areas and as labour tenants on white owned farms.⁵ This ability to continue working the land was both the outcome of their own struggles to keep their land and because of the continuation of some forms of non capitalist production was necessary for the migrant labour system to continue to operate - a system upon which capital relied for its high rates of accumulation at this time. A number of regional examples illustrate these processes. William Beinardt has shown how in Pondoland, for example, rural households and chiefdoms delayed rural dispossession by vigorously fighting to keep the ownership of their land and control over their cattle. At the same time, he argues, because:

"the mining industry demanded a large but cheap and unskilled labour force; a system of migrant labour in which wages paid did not have to cover the costs of maintaining the workers families was a means to that end. It was not therefore in the interests of the dominant classes in South Africa to further undermine reserve society once the flow of labour had been stimulated."⁶

As a result precapitalist kinship structures and the welfare role that these performed were able to survive in many areas and newly proletarianized workers often retained strong links with their rural homes. In this way they could return, in times of unemployment, illness or financial crisis, to the vestiges of security that their kinship networks offered. As early as 1914 Howard Pim noted that the reserve areas were already functioning as a

"sanatorium where they (the workers) can recuperate, if they are disabled they can remain there ... absolutely without expense to the white community."⁷

- a comment that illustrates how the maintenance of some forms of rural production and kinship structures allowed the accumulation of capital on the basis of cheap migrant labour to continue to operate.

The survival of labour tenancy and reserve production thus curbed the extent of proletarianization at this time. Large numbers of rural producers "remained constantly on the point of passing into the urban proletariat without in fact doing so."⁸ The extent of the influx of rural producers to the towns was also restrained by the fact that rural underdevelopment varied according to a wide range of local factors and thus took place in a regionally and socially uneven way. This is illustrated by a number of local studies of underdevelopment.⁹ Here it is only possible

to present a few brief examples to illustrate the point.

Colin Bundy for example, shows how the coercive power of the nineteenth century colonial states in the Cape and Natal and the impact of underpest and East Coast fever in these regions were able to extensively undermine the african peasantry that had grown up in these areas. By 1912 the Transkei alone was providing 40% of the workforce to the goldfields and in Natal 25% of the african population was forced to take paid employment, even before the crushing of the Bambatha rebellion in 1906 and the implementation of a new poll tax.¹⁰ However even within these regions the impact of underdevelopment was extremely uneven. The Pondo, for example, were never conquered militarily and this enabled them, for a long period, to maintain access to their land and control over their cattle. By 1911 Pondoland still maintained much economic autonomy and only nine to ten percent of the male population left for work in the towns compared to an eighteen percent average for other Transkeian territories. It was only after this region experienced the devastation of drought and East Coast Fever in 1912 that proletarianization on a large scale hit the Pondo people.¹¹

The Transvaal and Orange Free State Republics, by contrast, lacked the coercive power to enforce taxation and antisquatting laws designed to drive africans off the land. In the Transvaal many africans regained possession of the means of rural production on land evacuated by whites during the Anglo Boer War. After the war, the Milner Administration, ever concerned to maintain social stability in the Transvaal, was reluctant to antagonize rural africans by implementing antisquatting measures. This was further motivated by a need to maintain the supply of food that african peasants squatting on state land, were supplying to the mines.

The Transvaal was also characterized by a tradition of extensive land buying by african peasants. This tradition had its origins in the treaties and alliances that the weak trekker state was forced to make with african chiefdoms in the nineteenth century. By 1904, of the 900,000 africans in the Transvaal, 438,000 were renting private land, 100,000 farmed land that they owned and only 50,000 (18%) were in full time wage employment.¹²

Unlike other areas that were experiencing large scale labour migration before 1913 many parts of the Transvaal experienced a considerable lag between the passing of the Land Act and the effects of its implementation. Graeme Simpson has noted how many Transvaal africans were able to maintain a discretionary entry into the labour market until the 1930's because of the extensive peasant ownership of land in that province.¹³

The maintenance of some forms of precapitalist rural production and the uneven spread of rural underdevelopment, imposed for a number of decades, a constraint on the extent of proletarianization. It is possibly for this reason that the classical third world model of the growth of shanty towns did not occur around Johannesburg and other South African towns. Only when the brakes on rural underdevelopment were completely removed in the 1940's did this pattern of urban growth begin to occur. However it has recently become clear to scholars, that the process of proletarianization, uneven sporadic and incomplete as it was, did thrust a large and permanent working class into the towns of South Africa long before 1911.

One index of this is the extent of female proletarianization at the time. Between 1906 and 1908 a combination of droughts, diseases and the suppression of the Bambatha Rebellion produced "a new wave of proletarianization that surged through the countryside and deposited thousands of females in the cities."¹⁴ In 1911 a disastrous drought drove even more women and children to town. The Pedi were especially affected as droughts and locust plagues in the Eastern Transvaal made women and children in that area especially prone to proletarianization.¹⁵ Official figures show that the number of women in Johannesburg increased from 4,357 to 12,610 between 1911 and 1921 - a 180 per cent increase as against the five percent increase in the number of men, from 97,614 to 102,900 in the same period.¹⁶ And in 1913 the Commission of Enquiry into Assaults on Women reported that "the inclination of native women to come to centres of labour ... is growing rapidly in South Africa."¹⁷ A number of recent studies also show that the process of rural underdevelopment had effectively undermined the african reserve economies by late in the second decade of this century, rather than in the 1930's as is often suggested. Charles Simkins, for example, shows that the reserves had gone into economic decline by 1918 and after that experienced an irregular series of increases and slumps in rural productivity until the 1940's.¹⁸

All of this meant that a large population of african men, women and children, had by the late teens, come to the towns with the intention of settling there permanently. This prompted a series of official investigations which repeatedly confirmed the growth of a permanent urban african population. In 1912 a government report noted, in terms that were to resonate more powerfully in the ears of official policy makers a decade later, that already the african population of towns all over South Africa was "larger than is necessary for the European population of the towns."¹⁹ In 1920 the Housing Committee reported that

"In the towns there is a floating population of natives permanently attracted by the prospect of earning high wages (sic) and returning to their own homes when the desired accumulations are made, yet a large number of natives are undoubtedly permanent urban residents and many

have been born in locations and know no other home,²⁰
 The Interdepartmental Committee on Pass Laws of that year also recognized the existence of a relatively permanent Black population in the towns as did the Unemployment Commission and the Stallard Commission two years later.²¹

This permanent and semi permanent urban african population was not homogenous. It was made up of three main classes.

Firstly the industrial working class made up the biggest section of this population. Bonner has pointed out that during and after World War I manufacturing industry experienced a boom due to the artificial conditions of war time protection and sucked large numbers of newly proletarianized africans into its workforce.²² Secondly the forces that went into the making of the black working class also opened up opportunities for a relatively privileged black petty bourgeoisie in the towns. Rural people with basic educational qualifications were eligible for jobs as teachers, clerks and were able to set up small businesses. The size of this class is difficult to judge. Bonner uses the number of registration certificates (granted mainly to the self employed) and letters of exemption from the pass laws (given to those with over Standard 3 educational qualifications) issued to arrive at a figure of almost a thousand salaried or professional africans and slightly more self-employed small businessmen and craftsmen on the Rand in 1920.²³ He also suggests that a large number of women in town were literate (4,7% of Transvaal women from rural areas were literate while in the towns 31% were) and that these women were likely to become the wives of male members of the african petty bourgeoisie - thus swelling the size of ^{this} class and cohering it around the values of education and civilization.²⁴ Finally a substantial class of unemployed and occasionally employed workers grew up in the towns in this period - although the exact size of this group is difficult to gauge. The reason for this difficulty is that different factions of the dominant classes tended either to downplay or to exaggerate the size of this class of africans in accordance with their own interests. White householders and ratepayers who were concerned about increases in local rates and the decrease in property values that the existence of this class caused complained bitterly and persistently about their presence. For example in 1916 a municipal report noted that in Johannesburg,

"havens are available for natives who came to town with no intention of working at all and who now flourish in increasing numbers despite the Pass Laws and the vigilance of the police and the officials of the council."²⁵

The central governments committee of enquiry into the pass laws of 1920, on the other hand, tended to underplay the existence of a large industrial reserve army.²⁶

A possible reason for these discrepancies is that the local state's enquiry was more sensitive to the interests of local ratepayers whereas the central state's commission was more concerned about the industrial sector's growing need for cheap and unskilled labour.

A large proportion of unemployed africans was made up of women. Most women in the towns at this time were not absorbed into formal wage labour. The major sectors of the economy - mining and manufacturing industry - did not employ black women at all; and domestic service, the dominant form of wage labour for women, was not able to absorb all the black women in town (for reasons that we will look at later). We have already noted that the number of women settling in town in this period was extensive. Because of the lack of formal wage labour for them these women increased the ranks of the unemployed.

Although these formal categories - 'industrial working class', 'petty bourgeoisie' and 'unemployed' - can be used to describe the composition of urban african society it must always be remembered that there were no rigid distinctions between these classes and that individuals frequently moved between these class categories.²⁷ Moreover, all of the classes within the urban african community shared the same need for family accommodation and faced the same limited choice of housing types. To understand why all of these classes chose the slums as the most suitable form of accommodation it is necessary to make a brief survey of the various types of housing that were offered to them before 1923.

2. Black Working Class Residential Areas in Johannesburg 1900 - 1923*

a) Compounds

The most common form of employer provided housing in Johannesburg was the compound system used by the mining industry. Compounds were originally devised to control theft, drunkenness and desertion on the part of black workers on the Kimberley diamond mines.²⁸ After the discovery of gold they were quickly adapted to conditions on the Witwatersrand and used by the mining industry to minimize the subsistence costs of its labour force - thus allowing mining to continue operating on the basis of extremely low wages. Transport costs were eliminated as workers were housed at the point of production. The mines could take advantage of the economies of scale that compounds afforded and they could thus provide minimal health services and food supplies to their workers at a very low cost. The exclusion of families from the compounds also meant that the mining industry only needed to concern itself with the immediate survival needs of its male workforce.

Compounds were also used as a means of controlling and dividing the working class. They were easily regimented by compound police and insulated the workforce of each mine from the workers on other mines, from black workers in the industrial sector

*A note on Terminology

This term "black working class residential areas" is used loosely and descriptively here. Later it will become important to give more detailed meaning to this shorthand. This is for two reasons:-

a) Until the mid 1930's, with the implementation of effective urban segregation, large areas of the central city developed a distinctly non-racial character and housed people who in the official language at the time were described as "native", "coloured", "Asian" and "European". People belonging to the first three categories were subjected to a range of discriminatory laws and economic forces that limited the areas in which they could live. The term 'Black' refers to these people collectively. However, at times in this study it will be necessary to refer to forces applying specifically to people who retained links with precapitalist rural societies, that were undergoing severe stresses due to the impact of capitalism on the countryside. The term 'African' is used to identify these people.

b) The adjective "working class" is not wholly accurate either. It describes

and from contact with white miners.

Conditions in these institutions were appalling. Miners slept on concrete bunks in rooms with muddy floors and inadequate ventilation. Food was often not fit for human consumption and food rations and liquor regulations were used as a means of social control. - Discipline was maintained by a hierarchical police system composed of compound managers, indunas and compound police. Every compound had a detention room where workers could be handcuffed and placed in solitary confinement for defying regulations. In 1905 5,022 black miners died - 59% from diseases directly related to compound conditions and in 1911, 69 out of every 1,000 black miners died of pneumonia.²⁹

The compounds need no further description. It is sufficient to say that whenever the opportunity arose workers chose to avoid the compounds and seek out other types of employment and accommodation. Desertion became a major defensive response by miners to their conditions of exploitation. After the Anglo Boer war an informal boycott of the mines by black labour led to the importation of Chinese indentured labour.³⁰ In 1908, for example, 1,236 out of 2,000 workers at the Simmer Deep deserted. Luli Callinicos describes how deserters, informed by an informal intelligence network, knew that the Pass Office in Pretoria was less strict than in Johannesburg. They would travel there, use a variety of guises to obtain work-seeking permits and immediately go back to Johannesburg in search of jobs as domestic servants or factory workers. Many just moved into the slumyards. The police records of the time complain loudly that the slumyards were the haunt of Ninevites and other lumpenproletarian gangs that flourished on the Rand, and that were composed largely of mineworkers who had deserted.³¹

Apart from desertion mine labourers found other ways of avoiding the regimentation and sexual abnormality of compound life. In 1919, for example, the South African Police complained that large numbers of "migrants" lived in the slumyards of Vrededorp and that "these natives keep women here for the purpose of making and trading in illicit liquor."³² Long before this the Native Affairs Department noted that many mine workers lived outside the compounds in "unofficial locations" and that this was tolerated because "if not permitted to live with these females in some such places as these locations they would leave the mine."³³ It was for these reasons that the 1914 Commission of Enquiry into black worker unrest on the mines reported that although these locations were not favoured by the mines there should be the provision of "married quarters" to stabilize the workforce at the mine."³⁴

Many slum areas emerged precisely because they "facilitated these popular attempts

to remedy the alienation of compound life. Vrededorp and Prospect Townships were especially characterized by a close interaction between mine workers and the industrial reserve army - especially its female component.

b) Domestic Workers' Quarters

Up until recently domestic service has been neglected in analyses of Johannesburg's labour market - despite the fact that until World War I it was the town's second biggest employer of black labour. In 1904, when a shortage of labour forced mine owners to import Chinese labour, there were 20,000 "kitchen boys" in Johannesburg alone - compared to 68,000 men in all the compounds along the Reef.³⁵ The size of this sector of the labour market means that it was also an important source of housing for the black working classes of the town. Black workers considered domestic service much preferable to working on the mines. This sector of the labour market was governed by the Masters and Servants Act rather than by the strictly curtailed and long term contracts enforced by the mines. Individual employers of domestic workers were unable to monopolize the recruitment of their workers and as a result domestic workers were able to command wages of £3 to £6 before and after the Anglo Boer War - far higher than anything the mines could offer.³⁶

This sector also offered some employment to black women in town. In the periods 1906 to 1908 and 1912 to 1913 severe depressions hit the Rand, causing white wages to drop. A characteristic pattern developed in the domestic service sector of the labour market - men were replaced by women and children as servants and wages went down from an average of 90s p.m. in 1905 to 50s in 1908 before rising to 87s in 1913.³⁷

However although these women "introduced a new and growing element into the labour market they did not initially restructure it."³⁸ White women feared the effects of another woman in the house on their husbands' fidelity. Black women were not subject to pass laws and the constraints that these imposed on the bargaining power of black men and were thus able to demand and get the same wages as men. These factors limited the extent to which black women were absorbed into wage labour in the domestic sector.

Thus large numbers of women were excluded from domestic service and the accommodation that accompanied these jobs. For them the slumyards were the only alternative. However for some domestic workers - male and female - an element of choice was involved. There were many objectionable features about the conditions of domestic service that made living in the slums a preferable alternative. Men were especially reluctant to live on their employers' premises because of periodic outbursts

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of white racism and "black peril" scares in Johannesburg's suburbs. The Commission of Enquiry into Assaults on Women, appointed after one of these outbursts in 1913, blamed the newly emerging urban proletariat and reserve army of labour - "domestic servants, storeboys and the like, or not employed at all" - for the increase in assaults on women and lamented the fact that these classes were not subject to the same controls as the work force on the mines.³⁹ This led to a tightening of discipline and other restrictions being imposed on domestic workers by employers.⁴⁰

Residential conditions on employers premises were also often as bad as those in the slumyards. Servants generally slept in dingy outside rooms that were sometimes converted stables. There were also cases of servants being expected to sleep on the kitchen floor.

As a result domestic servants often chose collectively to rent houses in slum areas or to rent individual rooms in slum areas like Doornfontein, rather than tolerate the racism and degradation of the white suburbs, thus boosting the demand for slum accommodation.⁴¹

c) Municipal Locations and Compounds

The major form of housing for black workers, not housed on their employers' premises, was supposed to be provided by the Johannesburg town council - in terms of the powers allocated to this body for the 'control of Native locations and Asiatic Bazaars' by the British Administration of the Transvaal in 1903.⁴²

This was a responsibility that the local state was, for a number of reasons, unable to fulfil. (The constraints under which the local state in Johannesburg operated are examined in more detail in Section 3 below). In 1904 the first location for Africans was established near the Council's sewerage farm at Klipspruit. Nine years later, in 1913, the council made its next attempt to carry out its role of providing black working class housing by buying the abandoned mining compounds called Salisbury and Jubilee and adapted these so that 1,200 single male workers in the industrial and commercial sectors could be accommodated there. In 1918 plans were made to build another location near Newlands and this was to be called Western Native Township. The building rate here was however very slow and this location only offered housing in any significant quantity after 1923. In 1919 the council also leased another mining compound called Wemmer Barracks which was able to accommodate 1,100 migrant workers.⁴³ This type of accommodation was hopelessly inadequate and was despised by the African population because of the conditions of squalor and disease that prevailed there. In 1915 when the official number of

permits allowing male workers to live in slum areas in town was 10,000. The population of Klipspruit was only 5,500.⁴⁴ The lack of enthusiasm for living in this location was understandable. After 1910 the location was virtually surrounded by the council's sewerage farm and the mortality rate induced by the lack of sanitation and disease was dramatically high - 20 : 1,000 adults and 380 : 1,000 infants in 1914/15.⁴⁵ People lived mostly in V shaped huts which were described as "no more than a iron roof over the floor" and transport from the location to the town of Johannesburg, 12 kilometres away, cost sixpence a day - an amount that bit deeply into workers' already inadequate wages. The residents of the location were also subjected to a harsh regime of control by location authorities, which included liquor raids and the auctioning of owner built houses in the case of rental arrears.⁴⁶ It was for these reasons that Mrs. Ellen Louw and 122 other women sent a letter to the Mayor and the town council of Johannesburg stating their abhorrence of location life and their preference for living in the slums:

"It is a well known fact," they said "that our husbands are getting very low wages and cannot afford to discharge all their liabilities unless they get our assistance, we are confronted by rents, railway fines, poll tax, pass fees etc., which are all becoming our dangerous difficulties." (sic)

They added that Klipspruit was too far from their place of work and was disliked "when we have rooms in town in order that we may be conveniently near to our places of labour."⁴⁷

Municipal locations also failed to cater for the needs of the towns black petty bourgeoisie. All the houses in locations were equally small and unattractive and the council was aware that

"no accommodation was available for the better class single native, who complains of the roughness and insecurity of the accommodation in the council's compounds and of forced association with natives of questionable character."⁴⁸

The slums on the other hand offered a range of housing; from tin shanties to cottages formerly occupied by white families. These areas thus had far more appeal to all classes in the african community than did the compounds and location housing provided by the municipality.

d) Freehold Townships

At an early stage in the history of Johannesburg a number of property owners realized that a lucrative market was being created by the shortage of official housing for blacks - and it is here that Johannesburg's two black freehold townships have

H. Tobiansky began to plan a township for "Coloureds" in 1897 which he named Sophiatown after his wife Sophia. He began selling these stands to blacks after the Anglo Boer War and was encouraged by a declaration from the Law Department which stated that in its opinion blacks were entitled to buy land anywhere in Johannesburg so long as title deeds did not prevent this. By this stage a few blacks were living in Sophiatown and many others owned land there. Tobiansky owned the adjoining township of Martindale which also became a black freehold township. A third place where blacks could buy land was in nearby Newclare. Blacks had been living in this township since before the Anglo Boer War and in 1912 the owner, George Goch, after a long struggle against the town council, got the support of the Minister of Mines and official approval to develop the areas as an exclusively "Coloured" township.⁵⁰ The reason for selling to blacks here was that like Klipspruit these areas were close to the councils depositing site at Newlands and were therefore not popular amongst whites.

These three areas were unique in Johannesburg in that they were the only places where blacks owned land. Most other suburbs in Johannesburg had title deeds that prohibited the sale of land to any "Coolie, Indian, Asiatic or Native."⁵¹ These three townships were later to develop into a unique and thriving black community - collectively known and nostalgically remembered as Sophiatown or "Kofifi".⁵²

Alexandra township, eight miles to the north east of Johannesburg, was the one other area that allowed for blacks to own property on freehold tenure. The township was laid out in 1905 and, as its distance from town made it unpopular with whites, the Alexandra Township Company decided to sell land there exclusively to blacks.⁵³

Although these areas offered the same advantages over municipal, mining and domestic worker accommodation because of the absence of strict state or employer controls over the kind of life people could lead, they were also far out of town and able to house relatively small numbers of people. As a result, in 1921 only 2,642 africans, mostly tenants of White and Asian landlords, were housed in Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare.⁵⁴

rences were expressed within a situation that was already created and shaped by the operation of wider objective forces. It is the operation of some of these forces that this chapter now attempts to explore.

3. Capital and Black Working Class Housing in Johannesburg Before 1923.

a) Theory - the Collective Means of Consumption and the Reproduction of the Labour Force.

A number of writers have recently attempted to explain, theoretically, how the development of capitalism has affected and shaped the growth of cities. These writers acknowledge that cities existed long before the emergence of capitalism and therefore cannot be seen simplistically as the products of capitalist growth. However they argue that the requirements of capitalist growth did and still do affect the specific way in which the urban environment takes shape.⁵⁵

Jean Lojkin argues that the nature of the material environment in cities is shaped by the need for capital to concentrate, in as small a space as possible, the means of production (mines and factories), the institutions involved in the sphere of circulation of capital (financial houses, banks, commerce) and the means of reproduction of labour power (housing, health facilities, educational institutions etc). This spatial concentration, he argues, derives ultimately from "the constant tendency of capitalism to reduce indirect costs of production and costs of circulation, of capital" - by speeding up the circulation of capital and increasing the period during which capital is used productively.⁵⁶

Our concern here is with the influence of capital on the third category referred to in Lojkin's analysis - the means of reproduction of labour power. It is thus useful to look at this more closely.

For Lojkin the concept reproduction of labour power does not refer simply to the physiological reproduction and physical survival of the people who make up the labour force. It refers also to the need for a labour force to be adequately housed, clothed, fed, educated and cared for so that it continues to have the physical ability to work productively and the subjective willingness to accept the existing relations of production.⁵⁷

housing, health services, education, transport and recreational facilities. Lej-
 kine refers to these as "the collective means of consumption."⁵⁸

However the collective means of consumption are not necessarily forthcoming due to the operation of three general contradictions under capitalism which impose a triple limit on the way in which urban space can be used to ensure the reproduction of labour power.⁵⁹ These contradictions are:

a) The "anarchic" competition between different fractions of capital which prevents a coherent approach by the dominant classes to the use and organization of urban space so that the necessary goods and services for the reproduction of labour can be provided. For example, Pickvance points out that often a contradiction arises

"between capital engaged in the building industry and industrial capital in general. The former has an interest in a high selling price for housing to increase its profits, whereas the latter has an interest in low selling costs since housing is a subsistence commodity whose cost enters the determination of wage levels."⁶⁰

b) The second contradiction derives from the fact that housing and other collective services cannot be provided without land. However the institution of private property, which exists at the heart of capitalist relations, means that land is fragmented between property owners who are interested in gaining high ground rents for their land rather than in making this land available for the provision of public housing, hospitals, parks roads etc. Lamarche elaborates on this contradictory effect of the institution of landed property. He points out the property capital tends to be most interested in developing land for commercial purposes and housing takes second place except in places inhabited by the wealthy who can afford to pay high rents. Property capital also retains the right to withhold the decision to develop or sell land until conditions are conducive to more profits. Thus land-owners are often prepared to charge high rents for squalid housing until the conditions are right for slum clearance and redevelopment.⁶¹

c) The third contradiction is the fact that investment in the sphere of collective consumption (housing, roads, hospitals, etc.) tends to be unproductive and unprofitable and this therefore limits the capital available for the provision of these kinds of goods. Thus public housing and other collective goods are generally areas foreign to capitalist profitability. As a result working class demands and political struggle are often a more important motivating force than the profit motive in ensuring that the provision of these goods and services takes place.⁶²

Specific forms of these three contradictions existed and interacted with each other as capitalism developed in Johannesburg before 1923. An examination of these will thus help account for the limited provision of proper working class housing and the

consequent growth of slumyards in the town.

a) "Anarchic" Relations Between Fractions of Capital - The Housing Issue in Johannesburg Before 1923.

The differing and uncoordinated approaches by fractions of capital in Johannesburg to the use of urban land and the provision of working class housing have hardly been examined before. A brief and preliminary explanation for the lack of a concerted attempt by capital to provide alternative housing to the slums is attempted in this section.

Following Richard Johnson and others, Belinda Bozzolli has outlined the factors specific to mining capital's pattern of accumulation that made it reluctant to invest capital in any form of housing other than compounds. The mining industry existed, she argues, at the limits of its profit margins. The price of gold was fixed on the international market. The ore was of a low grade and capital costs were high. Unable to pass these costs onto a consumer market, the industry developed its characteristic pattern of labour exploitation based on the twin institutions of migrant labour and compound housing.⁶³ Thus it is not surprising that mining capital adamantly refused to contribute to the financing of housing and other services like sanitation and health care for the black working class and for the reserve army of labour, who lived in the slums and provided labour to the growing industrial sector of the economy. In terms of the Local Authorities Rating Amendment No. 45 of 1904 mining capital was exempted from paying municipal rates on land that it owned and paid only a tax on buildings and improvements to land. The central state claimed all revenue from taxes on mineral values and in 1916 and 1919 amendments to the 1904 Regulations even exempted mining from paying rates on buildings and improvements.⁶⁴ Hence rates on property and profits from the sale of municipal services were the only sources of municipal revenue for the provision of public housing, sanitation and health services and "the mineowners escaped almost completely from the burden of ratepaying."⁶⁵

Manufacturing capital, although it would have benefitted from a more adequately housed workforce, also lacked the finance to provide alternative housing and was also not taxed locally for the provision of public services. Until World War One the manufacturing sector of Johannesburg's economy was relatively small and undeveloped. In contrast to the rapid injection of capital into mining operations, manufacturing capital developed more slowly and was forced to insert itself into the wider social relationships already established by the mines. The manufacturing sector also operated under a number of cost constraints which limited its ability to adequately house its workforce. Very little surplus from mining was reinvested in

manufacturing. Finance capital was already linked to the mining sector which was generally opposed to the development of local manufacture especially when this involved the imposition of tariffs on cheaper imported goods. This made capital scarce for manufacturing. Finance was also not available from overseas as investors were generally not interested in spoiling "a lucrative export market."⁶⁶

These industries that did develop were only able to do so by virtue of some local advantages over metropolitan industry. These advantages included access to raw materials, ultra cheap labour power, proximity to local markets and repair work that was demanded by the mines. Local markets were however limited and constrained even further by the low consumption levels of the black working class. The lack of finance meant that manufacturing was unable to take advantage of mechanized production and economies of scale that were being developed in the metropolitan countries. This meant that manufacturing could only develop where simple technologies or an extension of handicraft production could be used and Belinda Bozzolli suggests that most manufacturing units remained at the level of petty commodity production until the mid-20's - with the possible exception of explosives, brewing, distilling, tobacco and sugar.⁶⁷ Labour intensive clothing and footwear manufacturers were able to grow, and engineering workshops proliferated - although these were limited to small jobbing and repair shops for the mines. The building industry was able to grow due to regional market advantages but, in general, large scale manufacturing only tended to develop where this suited the mines - e.g. as with explosives.⁶⁸

Manufacturing was especially vulnerable during the periodic depressions on the Rand that were linked to the fortunes of the mining economy. Bankruptcy due to overseas competition and undercapitalization was widespread at these times.⁶⁹

All of these factors meant that most manufacturers were unlikely to exhibit much concern for the reproduction of their workers and families - especially in a situation where a "surplus" of cheap black labour existed in the towns to replace old and worn out workers.

Chapter three will examine the effects of these factors on the wage structure adopted by manufacturing. For the moment it is enough to note that manufacturing was both unwilling and unable to finance housing schemes for its black workers. Some of the larger concerns did provide compound accommodation along the lines adopted by the mining industry but by 1923 out of a total of 70,000 african workers outside the mining industry only 6,000 were housed in these "private compounds".⁷⁰ For the rest, manufacturing relied on municipal housing financed from local rates

to house its workforce.

During this period mining capital operated in direct contradiction to manufacturing's need for cheap public housing. Mining capital was the largest landowner in the town and was in a position to shape the pattern of land use in the city to suit its own sectional interests. One third of the Johannesburg Municipal area was in the hands of mining companies in the form of proclaimed land - i.e. land which was actually or potentially gold bearing. These companies were not prepared to sell the surface rights of the land for public housing schemes and were not prepared to allow land no longer used for mining to be deproclaimed and used for residential purposes.⁷¹ Such was the strength of these companies that, when the council was desperately looking for a site to build a new location after World War One, the central state refused to exert pressure on the mines to sell surface rights for this purpose.⁷²

It was for these reasons that the white Labour Party launched a campaign against the exemption of mining companies from rates and demanded the release of proclaimed land for municipal use.⁷³ In 1922 the Stallard Commission also attacked the fact that mining escaped expenditure on items of collective consumption - "streets, sewerage, transport etc" and recommended that mining land be proclaimed when not in use and made available to the local state for town planning.⁷⁴

However mining's control over the use of land in Johannesburg extended well beyond the direct ownership of proclaimed land. Paul Rich has noted that, due to the inefficiency of capitalist agriculture at this time (and one might add due to the opposition of mining to manufacturing capital), the major area of investment outside of mining was in finance and land companies. The Corner House Mining Group, for example, bought up as much land as possible in Johannesburg. Through its Johannesburg Consolidated and Investment Company, the Mining and Investment Company and the Braamfontein Company (later to become the Transvaal Consolidated Land and Exploration Company [TCLE]), Corner House became the biggest landowner in Johannesburg. In 1910 it owned 2,400,000 acres of land and JCI was the biggest estate company in Johannesburg - selling residential sites in the north eastern suburbs of Doornfontein, Yeoville and Berea.⁷⁵

These investment patterns resulted in property owners in Johannesburg "without any formal combination on their part", creating "a practical monopoly which time and the increase of population only served to consolidate and extend."⁷⁶ Many of the important slum areas originated on land owned by mining companies. JCI owned old Doornfontein and had extensive control over the selling and renting of land in

New Doornfontein. Booysens was owned by Consolidated Goldfields, Booysens Reserve was owned by Crown Mines and City & Suburban belonged to the City and Suburban Gold Mining Company.⁷⁷ These Mining Companies were in a position to control the use of much land that was not directly related to mining operations. They were often happy to speculate with this land and to allow the development of slums on it until such time as conditions were profitable for it to be used in other ways. This attitude was clearly expressed by the Crown Mines Company which refused to sell land on a freehold basis for residential purposes in Booysens Reserve because there "the value of land is a gradually improving investment."⁷⁸

At the same time some mining companies were developing residential townships to the north and east of the city for the white petty bourgeoisie and working class - in pursuing its strategy of using housing to defuse white working class militancy.⁷⁹

The JCI owned Berea, Yeoville and Houghton Estate while Corner House owned Parktown and Westcliffe. Here it is possible to see the decisive influence that mining capital had on the shaping of urban space in Johannesburg. The characteristic shape of the town - a belt of unoccupied land running from east to west across the south of the town, blighted slums in the central area on land being held for future speculation and the spread of wealthy white residential suburbs to the north and north east of the town can be directly linked to the influence of mining capital and the land monopolies in which it invested.

Thus it can tentatively be suggested that mining capital's lack of concern for the reproduction of the black working classes and industrial reserve army who provided labour for the manufacturing sector, together with its extensive control over the use of residential land in Johannesburg, contributed substantially to the absence of proper housing for manufacturing's labour force and the consequent emergence of slums in the central areas of town to accommodate these people.

It must be pointed out, at this stage, that as a result of the political struggles of the dominated classes some attempts were made by mining and manufacturing to remedy the housing conditions that were seen as a cause of these struggles. During and after World War One the official associations of mining and manufacturing capital, notably WNLA, the Chamber of Mines and the Federated Chamber of Industries began to articulate the need for slum clearance and the provision of adequate municipal housing. This will be examined in more detail in Section 3 below. All that is necessary to point out here is that the abstract political arguments put forward about housing by these bodies carried little weight while economic forces prevented mining and manufacturing from cooperating with each other and contributing finan-

cially to a solution to the housing shortage.

b) Property Ownership as an Obstacle to Adequate Working Class Housing in Johannesburg.

To these constraints on the provision of black working class housing in Johannesburg was added "another type of agent which plays a particularly negative role: the landowner."⁸⁰ Apart from the fact the mining capital owned so much land in Johannesburg and used it for its own purposes there were other aspects to the behaviour of property capital which led directly to the growth of slumyards in the town.

The early form of land tenure in Johannesburg also produced a strong speculative drive within property capital. After the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand the S.A.R. Government offered land to individuals in the form of monthly tenancies or 99 year leases. The government also laid out various townships under the Gold Laws and sold these to the highest bidders, usually the mining and township companies. These companies then issued land to individuals on a leasehold basis. The leasehold system was adopted because of the uncertain future of the mining industry and the reluctance of individuals to commit themselves to the Rand. However once it became apparent that the mining industry was there to stay, the township companies held on to their land, waiting until such time as the commercial and industrial development of the town increased its value. The fact that buildings and improvements, as well as land values, were subject to municipal taxation meant that these township companies were reluctant to spend money on public improvements.⁸¹

The Transvaal Leasehold Townships Commission of 1912 noted that the interest of most companies in these old central townships stopped with the collection of rent. Congestion and deterioration made no immediate difference to the companies who were holding land on a speculative basis. Most companies included clauses in their leases that restricted or prohibited occupancy by blacks but these were most often ignored as it was precisely the black working class and 'surplus' population that was prepared to pay extortionate rents for the sordid buildings in the central slum areas. Because of the system of property ownership operative at the time the speculative impulse, that underlay the growth of slums, spread from the large township companies to individual owners of land. Most companies before 1912, and probably long after, did not sell individual plots freehold but let them on a long term leasehold basis. These small property holders were reluctant to make long term improvements to stands that they did not own in freehold and were also prepared to let their ramshackle buildings and converted warehouses and stables to the working

classes who were desperate for accommodation.⁸²

It was for these reasons that many official observers at the time identified property capital and its speculative operations as the major reason for congestion and slum conditions in the central areas of town. In 1912 the Leasehold Townships Commission complained that, "In our opinion landowners generally (including township owners in Johannesburg) and other Transvaal municipalities are not bearing today their proper portion of the municipal burden."⁸³ In 1914 the Dominion Royal Commission noted that in South Africa the existence of slums and rackrenting landlords was due to the fact that "the bulk of land fitted for closer settlement is held by individuals or by large township companies who are either expectant of a rise in values or for other reasons are unwilling to sell."⁸⁴ And in 1915 the Local Government Commission reported that "it is frequently stated that the holding up of land by large corporations causes poverty and slum conditions."⁸⁵

Here it must be noted that this argument about the role of property capital at times runs counter to the analyses that have been put forward by Paul Rich and Andre Proctor.⁸⁶ These two writers suggest that property owners were a dominant force in the support for Stallardist ideas of slum clearance, urban segregation and strict controls on the influx of blacks into the town. My suggestions require more research before they can be asserted confidently and it is also important to warn against treating property capital as a homogenous entity at this stage. It was made up of groups ranging from massive township companies backed by mining capital to individual house owners - and it is clear that Rich and Proctor refer mainly to the latter in their analyses.

Local factors were also, as we have seen, crucial in determining the differing attitudes of township companies. Often the same company was undertaking "urban development" in the northern suburbs whilst speculating with land in the central suburbs and tolerating rackrenting there. We have already seen how for example the proximity to the Newlands depositing site and distance from town influenced Tobiansky, Goch and the Alexandra Company to develop their townships on a non racial freehold basis.

The extent to which the interests of big property capital ran counter to the need for black working class housing is reflected in their successful opposition to numerous schemes for social engineering in the city. The Milner Administration, after the Anglo Boer War, made a real attempt to improve the supply of some collective services (e.g. transport and sewerage) to the city and was especially concerned to remove the militant section of the white working class from the volatile,

non-racial slums in the central parts of town. The Administration needed more control over land and attempted to convert leasehold into freehold tenures to achieve that aim but it experienced such violent protest from the township and land companies, who objected to the loss of ground rent involved that, the scheme was abandoned.⁸⁷

The local state also found it very difficult to expropriate property for the purposes of providing working class housing. This was clearly illustrated when, in 1903, the Council was forced to pay the grossly inflated price of £1,145,046 for the expropriation of the "coolie" location. This amount was charged against the rates of the town - paid by the town's working and middle classes - and provoked a huge controversy. It continued to haunt the towns rulers - who never again resorted to expropriation as a means of acquiring land for public housing.⁸⁸

The Township Act of 1908 and the amendments of 1908 and 1909 served partially to modify this pattern of development. Up to this point freehold was not procurable for residential or commercial use in town. The Act made freehold tenure obligatory in all new townships. Its effect was however limited as many residential areas had been laid out before 1907.⁸⁹ Thus older suburbs in the centre of town were the areas that tended to become slums as the white workers and middle class began moving into the northern suburbs.

The typical pattern of northward expansion and central congestion in Johannesburg depicted in the diagram below, was well under way by 1915 when it was commented that "the tendency has been to open up new districts in outlying parts with a consequent depreciation of districts near the town."⁹⁰

With the expansion of industry during World War One these areas became even more congested. Business rents became more lucrative than residential rents and more and more property on the east and west side of town was let out for commercial purposes where "the continued growth of Johannesburg as a commercial centre [was] evidenced by the building of palatial warehouses."⁹²

In 1918 the contradiction between commercial growth and the ability of capital to house its workforce was starkly illuminated. The value of buildings erected in town reached a record figure while the number of residential houses built declined from 6,578 in 1917 to 4,620 in 1918 and it was noted that industrial expansion "in and adjacent to the central" was pushing many people out of accommodation.⁹¹

The central slum areas now began to acquire their dominant characteristics as these "palaces" - the factories and warehouses symbolizing the wealth of the bourgeoisie grew up amidst the squalid houses and sprawling shacks that housed their workforce.

George Ballenden - the manager of the Native Affairs Department gives a more graphic description of how these factors led to the growth of Johannesburg's slum yards:

"When all available accommodation in the old decaying residential areas became exhausted, fresh families began to filter into residential areas still occupied by whites. Slum landlords began to run up rows of rooms built of any second-hand material, principally old corrugated iron, and to cram one or more families into each room. The business of letting to Native families was so profitable that not only slum landlords, but tenants and owners of dwelling houses, began to let to Native families outrooms, garages, coal-sheds, stables, in fact, any building that could be termed a room."⁹⁴

c) The Unprofitable Nature of Investing in Housing in Johannesburg.

Finally it is necessary to examine the third contradiction pointed to by Lojkin - the fact that in Johannesburg investment in housing for the black working class was not a profitable proposition for capital.

Firstly the tendency, outlined by Pickvance, for conflicts to exist between industrial and building capital operated in a specific form in Johannesburg. The low wages paid by manufacturing capital to the black working class meant that this section of the building market was very narrow and unprofitable. This was something that the 1915 Local Government Commission could use to defend the large township companies against the argument that they were responsible for slum conditions and it stressed that the unprofitability of house building was due to low black wages and uneconomic rentals.⁹⁵

Secondly, the general instability and boom-slump pattern of the mining industry had a destabilizing effect on the building industry. During the depression of 1906 "general uncertainty ... further depressed the trade and any building work offered for tender was competed for at almost starvation wages,"⁹⁶ while during the post 1910 boom building rates began to expand rapidly.⁹⁷

These erratic patterns of housebuilding were also linked to the volatile class conflict that punctuated life on the Rand in these years. In 1907 the miners' strike frightened capital off from long term investment in housing while the 1913 strike likewise heralded another major drop in the building rate.

Thirdly, the protected position of white labour in the building industry pushed costs of building up dramatically. In 1918 when the council was levelling ground for the building of Western Native Township it cost £30,000 using white labour whereas it was estimated that the cost of black labour for the job would have been £20,000.⁹⁸ In 1919 a strike by white building workers for a 44 rather than a 48⁹⁹ hour week also caused a drastic reduction in the rate of private building in town.

Finally the shortage of artisans during the war and the increased cost of building materials caused a drastic drop in building activity. In 1915 the Town Engineer reported that the building rate in Johannesburg had been cut to a quarter of the normal rate and he noted that building that did take place was for industrial and commercial purposes, due to the war time boom, rather than for housing people.¹⁰⁰

All of these factors combined to create a situation in which a resident in a tumble-down slum house in Jeppe could aptly comment; "fools build houses and wise men live in them."¹⁰¹ An official source noted that "there is no dearth of profitable investment for money in South Africa and house property, unless it yields a good percentage of interest, is naturally not attractive as an investment." "As regards houses for the poorer classes of white people, coloured, native and Asiatics," it went on "there can be no doubt that, as private enterprise has not in the past met the need, it would be futile to rely on its doing so in the future ... and it is only the authorities local as central, which can be expected to take action."¹⁰²

The task of providing housing for the black working classes thus fell, by default, to the local state in Johannesburg. The way in which the town council attempted to carry out this task and the constraints under which it operated in this area are the subject of the next section.

4. Housing, Class Struggle and the Local State.

Given these constraints on the ability of capital to provide even minimal housing and collective services for its labour force in Johannesburg, the question arises as to why public housing, transport, health services, and sanitation were provided at all. It is here that the state played a crucial role - in the administration and management of activities that were not profitable to capital but were necessary for smooth economic functioning and the appeasement of social conflicts.¹⁰³

Intervention by the state to provide the goods and services necessary to ensure the reproduction of labour occurred historically in many industrializing countries. In England, for example, it has been observed that:

"the direct involvement of the state in the provision of working class housing from 1919 onwards was fundamentally a response to the inability of the private sector to ensure an adequately supply - a deficiency with immense implications for the reproduction of labour power needed by industry ... the form and timing of this intervention were in part a response to the problem of maintaining legitimacy at a time when working class militancy was pronounced and when there was a genuine fear of the possibility of revolutionary action."¹⁰⁴

In Johannesburg the responsibility of providing housing to black workers also devolved historically onto the local state and its apparatuses. The workings and limitations of these local state agencies are therefore crucial in explaining the gap between the growth of capitalism and the provision of black housing in the city - and the emergence of slumyards to fill this gap.

In order to understand how the local state authorities acquired the responsibility for providing public housing and other collective services and the contradictions that it faced in an attempt to carry out this role, it is again useful to look at some more general theoretical arguments.

Most of the theoretical literature on the subject focuses on state intervention in the supply of collective means of consumption under advanced capital - and it is necessary to be wary of uncritically applying these concepts to an earlier period of capital accumulation. Lojkin, however, does make the point that capital "restricted to the immediate exploitation of productive labour" during the phase of primitive accumulation is especially reliant on the state for the supply of material supports necessary for the survival of its labour force. He also argues that this intervention by the state to limit "the spontaneous tendencies of capital accumulation" does not necessarily solve the contradictions but "takes them onto a new level."¹⁰⁵

There is a functionalist tendency in this argument which both Castells and Lojkin are aware of. The intervention of the state, says Castells, is not "a simple regulating mechanism. The action of the state is the result of a political process which is largely determined by class struggle."¹⁰⁶ According to Lojkin "state interventions are not a safety valve in the working of a well oiled machine but are a reflection of mass struggles and worker pressures, which oblige the state to limit the 'spontaneous' tendencies of capital accumulation."¹⁰⁷

Despite this apparent deference to the role of class struggle these authors do not provide a method of approaching "a class analysis which is historically and dialectically oriented and which surveys conditions of capital accumulation, of class struggle and class consciousness."¹⁰⁸ Poulantzas' most recent work on the state provides a more useful set of guidelines for an historical explanation of the activities of the state in the provision of public goods and services. His argument can be summarized as follows:

1) The state tends to set up specific apparatuses in order to fulfil the role of managing the provision of the means of collective consumption. This process involves the creation of new problems of access and exclusion to these apparatuses and "each state branch or apparatus frequently constitutes the power base and favoured representative of a particular fraction of the power bloc [the group of classes and class fractionsⁱⁿ whose interests the state rules] or of a conflictual alliance of several fractions opposed to certain others." The result is a set of "internal contradictions between and at the heart of, its (the state's) various branches and apparatuses, following both horizontal and vertical directions."¹⁰⁹

2) These internal divisions cannot only be explained in terms of contradictions amongst classes and fractions of the power bloc. The working of the state also crucially depends upon the relations of force between the power bloc and the dominated classes. The dominated classes in fact often have formal access to some apparatuses of state (e.g. the courts, the education system, the army) and these can become the site of real struggles between antagonistic class interests. However these struggles are also present in the state "in a mediated form through the impact of popular struggle on contradictions among the dominant classes and fractions themselves contradictions are always present within the power bloc and concern relatively minor problems as well as broad political options. Among the latter is the choice of the very state forms to be established against the popular masses."¹¹⁰ Thus:

"the celebrated social functions of the state directly depend, both for their existence and their rhythm and modalities, on the intensity of popular mobilization: whether as the effect of struggles or as an attempt to deruse struggles on the part of the state."¹¹¹

3) The conflicts between classes and fractions within the power bloc can result in a fragmented approach to the reproduction of labour power. These constraints on the state are crucially bound up with

"the material resources at its disposal it is essentially profits on capital which establish the limits to state taxation of incomes; beyond a certain point it is impossible to touch these profits."¹¹²

This point is crucial and is underscored by Saunders, another analyst of the state, who says, "of all the constraints operating on the local state, the inability to finance social expenditure appears the most significant of all."¹¹³

The exact nature and constitutional manner in which these duties are allocated to various state apparatuses obviously varies from country to country. However there are a number of reasons for this role being allocated most conveniently to local agencies of the state. These are related to the geographical and logistical advantages of being close to the environment in which the day to day survival and reproduction of the working class takes place. Engels commented on this when he noted the simultaneous development of the local state and working class nuclear family structures during the industrial revolution in England.¹¹⁴

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In England the development of new local state structures during the "municipal revolution" of the late nineteenth century were closely related to increasing demands imposed on the state by proletarianization and urbanization. These pressures, however, have serious effects on cleavages within the state which were ultimately related to the financing of means of working class reproduction. In London, for example, huge conflicts occurred over rating policies as the urban ratepayers objected to paying for "the squire's privilege of depopulating the agricultural districts" of England.¹¹⁵ Ratepaying fell most heavily on small house owners and this class was strongly opposed to the large owners of land receiving ground rent and escaping the bulk of the rate burden. This imposed limits on state intervention in the reproduction of the working class and meant that the central state resorted to a bureaucratic method of allocating these roles to the local state - without providing the necessary funds.¹¹⁶ These methods in turn set up an inherent tension between the central and local state levels which involved a "fierce and complex battle over the social costs of reproduction." The resolution of these conflicts within the state involved a series of political "processes by which 'non antagonistic' contradictions were brought into conformity with the social formation as a whole."¹¹⁷

There were direct linkages, similarities - and differences between these events in England and the historical development of the local state, slumyards and public housing in Johannesburg.

a) The Local State, Inadequate Municipal Housing and the Growth of Slums in Johannesburg Before 1923.

The central areas of Johannesburg had, by the time of the Anglo Boer War, become heavily congested. Between 1890 and 1896 half of the urban population lived in the centre of town and here slum conditions developed even before the Anglo Boer War. The first black working class residential areas provided by the local state in Johannesburg were located on the west side of the town centre. This was a conglomeration of five locations that became one large slum area. They were known at the time as the "Malay Location", the "Kaffir Location", Brickfields, the "Coolie Location" and Vrededorp.¹¹⁸ The "Coolie" and "Kaffir" Locations began when the government of the South African Republic decided to lay out residential stands for 1,726 "Coolies" and 1,285 "Kaffirs" immediately to the west of Braamfontein cemetery. Sandwiched between these two locations and the cemetery itself, the government established the township of Vrededorp for white burghers and the "Malay" location for Indians. The "Malay" location and Vrededorp were divided by a narrow road and in fact formed one residential unit. Brickfields was an area next to the "Coolie" location which was originally set aside in 1891 as a residential and industrial area for poor whites working in the fledgling brickmaking industry.

The names of these areas reflect an early attempt by the state in Johannesburg to create separate ethnic residential areas. Reality did not conform to the neatness

of official labelling. As primitive accumulation took its toll of rural producers of all ethnic categories, this part of the town acquired a distinctly non-racial character and in fact became one large slum area. For example in 1903 the Malay location had a total population of 3,276 - of whom only half were "Asiatic", 937 "half-castes", 405 "European" and 252 "Native" - according to official statistics. In the "Kaffir" location and in Vrededorp large numbers of White, Indian and Chinese traders opened businesses while the area known as Burghersdorp (including the "Coolie" location) had a population of 5,651 in 1902 and this included 2,206 Africans and 1,001 White burghers.¹¹⁹

Other areas also became heavily congested before 1900. Between 1890 and 1896 the Ferreiraastown population increased from 2,250 to 10,000, Marshalltown from 2,000 to 7,000 and Fordsburg from 1,400 to an incredible 12,000. This can be contrasted to the new white suburbs in the north where the population ranged from 100 to 500 people.¹²⁰

The government of the Transvaal Republic in the late nineteenth century was ill equipped to cope with the sudden emergence of a large urban centre after the discovery of gold. As a result the administration of the town was poorly developed and most local matters were left to an elected diggers committee to handle.

After the Anglo Boer War the British Administration began the first concerted attempt to build a system of urban government along the lines of the British model. Marks and Trapido note the wide range of tasks facing this Administration - from the creation of a new bureaucracy including a Native Affairs Department, to the provision of housing, health services and sanitation - in order to construct conditions necessary for the profitable expansion of the mining industry. It was here that the basic structures of the local state in Johannesburg were established.¹²¹ In 1901 the first town council of Johannesburg was nominated and in 1903 this nominated council was replaced by an elected body of 30 councillors.¹²²

Milner's plan was to bring in experts in social engineering and rational urban planning - who had learnt their trade from the English experience. Lionel Curtis, the Acting Town Clerk of Johannesburg since 1901 had, for example, been directly involved in local government in London. Curtis was determined to divide the white and black sections of the working class and to move white labourers into the northern suburbs where they would be exposed to the moderating influence of middle class life. It was, for him, necessary to avoid "a state of affairs which had reached dangerous proportions at the present day in England and America, where the rich and well-to-do white classes who think with their heads, have been allowed to separate their social life from that of the white labouring classes, who work with their hands."¹²³ In 1904 the outbreak of plague in the "Coolie" location provided the council with the pretext needed to expropriate the heavily congested

slums in that part of town - a scheme that had long been planned by the social engineers in the administration. Sixteen hundred "Asiatics" and 1,358 "Natives" living there were moved to two separate sites on the councils sewerage farm at Klipspruit and the old location was burned down and replaced by the rationally laid out commercial centre of Newtown.¹²⁴

Klipspruit thus became Johannesburg's first segregated location and the council planned eventually to compel all Africans not accommodated on their employer's premises to move there. In 1906 an ordinance was passed compelling all africans not residing on their employers' premises to live in locations.¹²⁵ These plans were, however, obstructed by intense conflicts within the dominant classes in Johannesburg over the way in which slum clearance was taking place.

Industrialists and small employers of black labour, objected vehemently through the Chamber of Commerce to the scheme which forced their workers to travel 12 miles to and from work every day and which obviously affected their productivity.

As a result of this opposition from some sectors of capital the council relented and introduced a permit system which exempted individual africans from the 1906 Regulations. These permits were granted only to those workers who could prove that they began work before 6 a.m. and ended after 7 p.m. This regulation and the permit system as a whole were, however, difficult to enforce. The permits gave a legal sanction to the continued existence of black slums in the town and were easily ignored by slum landlords eager to rent their property to desperate people without permits.¹²⁶

The weakness of the local state's attempts to house black workers in the segregated location was reinforced by opposition from the colonial administration to the inconvenient location of Klipspruit. In 1906, Taberer, the Native Commissioner, officially disapproved of the council's plans to compel all africans to move there because of the problems this would cause for employers.¹²⁷

It seems that even at this early stage in the development of a national capitalist state the local and central levels of government were responding to different class pressures. The town council was directly affected by the feelings of white petty bourgeois and working class property owners who objected to the downward pressure that slum conditions exerted on the value of their property and the upward pressure that attempts to eliminate these conditions placed on their rates. The Milner Administration on the other hand, appeared to be far more concerned with the interests of mining capital, the big land companies and the small industrial

and commercial sectors of the economy - whose economic interests at this stage did not require an urgent programme of slum clearance and some of whose interests were directly threatened by such a programme.

The fiscal basis of local government in Johannesburg was also laid down during Milner's Administration - a system which made the local state responsible for financing the provision of goods and services necessary for the reproduction of the black labour force in the town and at the same time exempted the major sectors of the economy - commerce, mining and manufacturing - from contributing directly to the costs of this. In 1902 and 1903, a number of local ordinances were passed giving the council the right to impose municipal taxes, layout townships, build sewers, hospitals and townships, provided for control over "native locations and Asiatic Bazaars", allowed for the expropriation of land for municipal purposes and gave the council powers to make revenue out of the provision of services like sewerage and sanitation.¹²⁸ At this time much debate took place in planning circles about the best form of local taxation to use. Strong arguments were put forward for a system of site value taxation only. This, it was argued, would impose the burden of municipal taxation on owners of vacant property and would encourage large land investment companies to develop their property by building on it immediately.¹²⁹ However we have already seen the power that the land companies wielded when they blocked the Milner Administration from encouraging property development by changing leasehold tenure to freehold. On this occasion the big land companies, backed by mining capital, also exerted their influence and the Milner Administration was forced to introduce a compromise system of taxing the site value of property and the value of buildings instead. This was done in terms of the Rating Ordinance of 1902. The effect was to shift a large proportion of the burden of local taxation onto small property and house owners - primarily the white working class and petty bourgeoisie. In addition we have seen that mining was exempted in 1904 from paying rates on all proclaimed land (although it did pay rates on improvements on this land) and no local taxes were levied on the profits of mining commerce or industry.¹³⁰ The 1903 Municipal Corporation Ordinance and the 1906 General Municipal Ordinance stipulated that the municipality would bear the cost of public housing despite the fact that the major employers of labour were not contributing directly to municipal finances. This laid the basis for long and bitter struggles within the town's dominant classes as local ratepayers objected to paying for the provision of the services and commodities that were needed for the basic reproduction of black workers who provided labour for commerce and industry.

In 1907 Milner's Administration ended and a system of representative government was introduced in the Transvaal - thus opening the Transvaal government up to

party political conflicts over who would bear the burden of municipal taxation.¹³¹ In the same year the Tucker Commission of Enquiry was appointed to look into local rating policies.¹³² The appointment of this commission was an indication of the elected provincial administration's concern to defuse the antagonism, towards financing the activities of the local state, that was building up amongst ratepayers. The Union constitution continued the system of elected local and provincial administrations and this resulted in an intensification of this pressure from ratepayers - which in turn opened up conflicts over the issue of local taxation - both within the local state and between the local and central levels of the state in the decade after 1910. The intensity of this conflict was reflected in the number of commissions of enquiry that were appointed later in this decade to look into ways of easing the burden that was imposed on local taxpayers by the state's method of meeting the need for the reproduction of the labour force in the towns. (See pp.78-80) Moreover, the political tensions that resulted from the fiscal nature of local government served to further limit the Johannesburg' town council's ability to provide the black working class housing that was urgently needed in the town.

After union the influx of white and black people into the town from the rural areas also increased and the slum problem steadily worsened. The slum areas that developed consisted of a variety of building types. Some areas became congested as house owners built a number of shacks in their backyards and let these out to blacks. Sometimes old houses, evacuated by tenants moving into the new north eastern suburbs, would be subdivided into a number of small rooms and let to black tenants. In the same way old sheds, warehouses and even stables were divided-up and let out as "rooms". As the rackrenting business grew more profitable landlords would rent vacant pieces of ground, and construct rough shanties out of raw brick and corrugated iron. In this way whole yards were turned into heavily crowded slums. In Ferreirastown, for example, in one year alone £50,000 worth of property was let out as slum accommodation¹³³ and in the 1920's some of the slumyards in Doornfontein housed over 300 people each.¹³⁴

According to the Medical Officer of Health this pattern of slumyard development had already set in by 1913. "There are" he reported in that year, "certain quarters in Johannesburg, especially in Fordsburg, Ferreirastown, Marshalltown, City and Suburban and old Doornfontein, a considerable number of old dwellings which are of very poor construction, dilapidated and crowded in area the fact that they are old and dilapidated induces a certain class of property owner to acquire and let them promiscuously at very remunerative rents to mean whites, coloured people and Asiatics."¹³⁵

During World War I the slums became even bigger. Increasing numbers of rural people were sucked into Johannesburg's permanently urbanized proletariat as a result of the boom experienced by manufacturing capital due to the stimulus of artificial war time protection. Between 1915/1916 and 1917/1918 1700 new factories were opened up while the gross value of manufacturing in 1915/1916 doubled from £35m to £76.8m in 1919/1920.¹³⁶ On the Witwatersrand specifically the number of factories grew from 862 to 1762 between 1916 and 1922 - a growth of 104% compared to the national average of 73%.¹³⁷ This boom was accompanied by a severe depression in the building industry due to the shortage of artisan labour and the high cost and scarcity of imported building materials - thus contributing to the congestion that was taking place in the slums.¹³⁸

By 1916 10,000 permits had been granted to africans allowing them to live in the slum areas and it is safe to assume that the actual number of slum residents was far higher. The council was so perturbed by this that it appointed a special committee in 1915 to look into the "steady increase of slums due to the want of a proper system of housing natives in the municipal area."¹³⁹ It also began piecemeal attempts to provide alternative accommodation for the growing proletarianized classes in the city.

In 1913 the council had bought the old Salisbury and Jubilee mining compounds and converted these so that they could accommodate 1200 single male workers. The Special Committee of 1915 realised that these hostels were not sufficient and advised the council to build a location closer to town which would be more suited to the growing industrial sector in Johannesburg. After much delay the council announced plans to build a new "native location" on its depositing site at Newlands. This was the origin of Western Native Township. However, the development of this location was slow and the council's plans to move all of the 3641 African inhabitants of Malay location there were a dismal failure.¹⁴⁰ In desperation the council switched back to the tactics of building compounds for male migrant workers and in 1919 leased the Wenmer Compound from the Village Main Reef Gold Mining Company - a hopelessly inadequate attempt to compensate for the slow building rate in Western Native Township. The council was aware that rural africans were not simply accepting the official system of migrant labour and that thousands of women were also leaving the countryside for the towns. However, the only response of the council was to make plans for the building of a hostel - which would only house 107 african women in town.¹⁴¹

By 1919 20,000 people were estimated to be living in the slums whilst by 1923 only 6,600 people were housed in council accommodation at Klipspruit, Western Native

Township, Wemmer Compound and the Jubilee and Salisbury Compound and only 2,642 people were housed in the three freehold areas of Johannesburg.¹⁴²

Clearly the council could do little to dislodge the bulk of the town's black proletariat and industrial reserve army from the slums and the population of these areas escalated dramatically.

b) Housing Conditions, Popular Struggles and State Urban Policy 1910 - 1923

After the formation of Union the South African state did not formulate a coherent "urban native policy" and this was partly due to fragmentation and division within the dominant classes over urban issues such as the provision and financing of housing, sanitation, health and other collective services needed for the reproduction of the black urban workforce.

The South Africa Act of 1909, which laid the constitutional basis for Union, aggravated matters by introducing the system of provincial administration as a new level of government between the local and central levels of the state. This proliferation of state departments caused much confusion about which agencies of the state were responsible for the administration of issues relating to black residents in urban areas. Under this Act the control of municipal legislation remained the responsibility of the Provincial Council but the control of "Native Affairs" was reserved for the Governor General in Council. In the same year the Urban Areas Native Pass Act, which established a set of influx control regulations for 'proclaimed' urban areas as opposed to rural labour districts, allocated the administration of passes and the revenue received from passes to the Native Affairs Department of the central state. In most other urban areas the state was given this responsibility. These constitutional anomalies led the Department of Native Affairs to report that much debate existed "as to whether in the exercise of their powers in regard to natives, the local authorities were to be subject to the provincial or the Union Government."¹⁴³ The lack of concern for urban africans was also reflected in the fact that a bill drafted in 1912 to deal with black housing in the towns was never passed by parliament.

However, the increasing strain placed on the ability of the black working classes in Johannesburg to survive and to reproduce themselves, along with an outburst of militant political struggles that developed around the harsh conditions in the towns, increased the pressure on the state to take account of the urban question and to develop a more coherent policy towards blacks in the urban areas. As a result between 1910 and 1923 a gradual and piecemeal process of policy formulation took place - a process which can be explained, according to Poulantzas, in terms

of the state policies depending "both for their existence and their rhythms and modalities, on the intensity of popular mobilization whether as the effect of struggles or as an attempt to defuse struggles on the part of the state." (See pp.46-47) A brief outline of the key phases in the development of state "urban native policy" and the culmination of this process in the passing of the 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act is presented below.

The first signs of concern about the physical survival and productivity of the black working classes after 1910 came about as a result of high working class mortality rates caused by the spread of tuberculosis. The Tuberculosis Commission reported in 1912 that living conditions in the locations were the main cause of the disease. It urged that local authorities should be given more powers to provide proper housing, water supplies and sewerage for black workers. The Commission also noted with concern that the provision of these services would impose a heavy burden on the ratepayers of the town. In order to ease the burden of municipal rates and dampen the conflicts that these caused within the town's ruling classes the Commission urged that strict controls over the influx of 'surplus' africans be enacted - an early expression of what was to become a major demand on the part of the local state in the years that followed.⁴⁴

In 1912 a "black peril" scare broke out along the Rand. This was a violent white response to an increase in sexual assaults by black men - mostly domestic workers - on white women. Van Onselen argues that these assaults were a form of resistance by black men to the increasingly exploitative conditions of their employment on the Rand and he notes that the "black peril" came at a time when domestic workers' wages were being heavily cut.^{144a} The Commission that was appointed as a result of the black peril pointed to another factor. It argued that the non racial slums developing in town were responsible for the increase in sexual relationships and assaults across the "colour line". As a result it urged that the local state should undertake a more effective slum clearance campaign and that it should accept more responsibility for the reproduction of a healthy black work force by providing more roads, trees, water supplies, electricity, adequate recreation and sport and special areas within black locations to house a privileged black petty bourgeoisie. It suggested a separate "native" revenue account to finance the building of locations and the provision of these services as well as the establishment of advisory boards to give some semblance of participation by africans in the running of their locations.¹⁴⁵ These were also early expressions of ideas that later were to feed into the formulation of the 1923 Urban Areas Act.

After the "black peril" scare working class and popular militancy mounted. There

was a major strike by black and white mine workers in 1913 and further strikes by black miners in 1915, 1916 and 1917. These strikes were often related to urban living conditions outside the mines. Evidence to the 1914 Native Grievances Enquiry, for example, suggested that "town boys" were the main organizers of the strikes and the report of this enquiry suggested that reforms in the locations outside of mining compounds, and thereby "the stabilization of a more permanent labourforce", would help prevent permanently urbanized africans from participating in the organization of resistance by black miners.¹⁴⁶

Health conditions in town worsened so much that they stretched the ability of black workers to survive in the city to crisis point. Between June 1918 and July 1919 the influenza epidemic claimed the lives of 11 out of every 1 000 africans in town and in a few weeks the epidemic killed 127,745 "non Europeans" all over the country.¹⁴⁷ The infantile mortality rate for the same period was 401,37 out of every 1,000.¹⁴⁸ This crisis in the reproduction of the black urban working class translated itself into waves of volatile popular militancy that swept the Witwatersrand during and after 1918. The collective grievance over housing was reflected in the famous bucket strike of 1918, the shilling campaign conducted by a radicalized Transvaal Native Congress leadership and the anti-pass campaign of 1919 - "one of the more dramatic expressions of African class unity to be seen in this period."¹⁴⁹ Police spy reports of meetings where these campaigns were organized show that housing shortages and grievances over township and slumyard conditions were important factors feeding into these struggles. Police spies noted that Doornfontein and Vrededorp were the centres of TNC organization during the struggles of 1918 and 1919.¹⁵⁰ "Congress Yard" in Van Breeck Street, Doornfontein, was a favourite meeting place and the police complained that the slumyards were the "storm centres" of popular militancy.¹⁵¹ Reflecting on the crisis the police argued in 1920 that "the history of housing of natives on the Reef has been one of big neglect which is now coming back on those responsible."¹⁵² The slums also housed and protected those involved in other forms of resistance to exploitation - the Ninevites and other lumpenproletarian criminal organizations that plagued the police at this time.¹⁵³ The SAP complained that these gangs found "a ready shelter in these yards" and that "thousands of natives of all classes live in the towns of Johannesburg and probably other parts of the Reef and the police are powerless to clear them out."¹⁵⁴

Location conditions were also important in fuelling mass anger.¹⁵⁵ The Klipspruit residents had, for example, been sending a series of deputations since 1900 to the Department of Native Affairs and the Parks and Estates Committee of the Town Council. In 1919 violent resistance erupted leading to an official enquiry into conditions in the location and the firing of the location superintendent.¹⁵⁶ At a meeting

preceding the shilling campaign the location system was also singled out for attack by a TNC leader who "pointed out Klipspruit and Germiston locations as the place of the natives where all the dirt from the town is deposited or thrown. This aims at making natives bring forth unhealthy children who would soon die away!"¹⁵⁷

The Influenza Commission of 1918 reported that housing conditions "facilitated the spread of the disease and tended to increase mortality." It urged more state intervention in the provision of black housing and a "reasonable security of tenure" for blacks "so as to encourage the building of a better type of housing."¹⁵⁸ In the same year a draft bill was drawn up by the Department of Native Affairs allowing for the "establishment of better management and control of locations and other places of residence for natives" and in September, 1918, Louis Botha urged the Administration of the Transvaal to take up the issue of black housing with local authorities. The emphasis of the bill was on the control of urban africans rather than on influx controls and unlike later legislation it did not provide mechanisms for the expulsion of unemployed blacks from the towns.¹⁵⁹ In 1919 the Public Health Act was passed giving local authorities some power to remedy or prevent unhealthy housing conditions. Justifying the Act, the Department of Native Affairs reported that the economy had grown during the war and that,

"the demand for native labour is likely to grow insistent with the return of peace and a period of industrial and agricultural expansion. From the purely commercial aspect, therefore, apart from any higher motive this question is of the first importance."

and it went on to stress that there was an "urgent need for better medical services in native areas."¹⁶⁰ (My emphasis). The Health Act was followed in 1920 by the Housing Act which allowed the central government to assist local authorities in planning housing schemes and allowed town councils to raise loans for such programmes.¹⁶¹

Popular urban resistance was not confined to Johannesburg. There were riots in Kimberley in 1917 and in Bloemfontein and Port Elizabeth in 1918 - all of which led the Department of Native Affairs to report in 1919 that "it is in the towns that the native question of the future will in an ever increasing complexity have to be faced."¹⁶²

financing of working class housing and other municipal services. As a result they were not able to become an effective solution to the "urban problem" and the conflicts that this problem opened up within the dominant classes. These conflicts over finances had begun escalating during the war. Pressure from white ratepayers led to the appointment of another commission of inquiry into the municipal rating system in 1915 and at the same time the Labour Party mounted a campaign in the Provincial Council for a system of site value taxation - that would shift some of the burden of municipal rates back onto the big landowning companies.¹⁶³

The 1915 Commission rejected the Labour Party's arguments claiming that the township companies were in fact developing the northern suburbs and that the low wage policy of industrial capital was responsible for the unprofitable nature of building alternative housing to the slumyards. This led to the Labour Party member on the Commission to charge that "it was only natural that the large land and township companies should send representatives to argue against the proposed change."¹⁶⁴ This bickering within the dominant classes over the financing of public housing delayed the adoption of site value taxation until 1918 - after the Labour Party had achieved a majority on the Provincial Council.¹⁶⁵ This apparent resolution of the rating issue, however, hardly solved the local state's financial dilemma. Low wages, the resultant unprofitable housing market and the resistance of mining and manufacturing capital to financing working class housing were deep seated contradictions that remained unaffected by this measure. Despite the loan provisions of the 1920 Housing Act, the State was also not prepared to spend money on the public housing that it allocated as a duty to the local state. In the year of this Act the Union government earned £827,527 in taxes and £42,169 in compound and pass fees imposed on blacks which were not used for urban housing. In the same year the Johannesburg Town Council spent a total of £236,484 on various housing schemes for blacks in Johannesburg and between 1915 and 1920 it lost £21,651 on the administration of Klipspruit location.¹⁶⁶

In this situation the local state embarked on a new two pronged campaign that was to bring it increasingly into conflict with the apparatuses of the central state. In 1916 the Johannesburg Town Council sent a deputation to enquire into the system of housing blacks from profits from the municipal sale of beer which operated in Durban. Between 1913 and 1920 the total revenue from the Durban Municipal beer monopoly was £232,000 while the expenditure on housing was only £177,000.¹⁶⁷ Impressed with this method of making black workers pay for the costs of their own housing the Johannesburg local state continuously pressed the central government for powers to do the same. However widespread opposition to this form of financing black housing, coming primarily from church bodies, led the Secretary for

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Native Affairs to refuse to grant the local state powers to do this and to insist that, "it was the duty of the municipal authorities to establish locations and barracks presumably from town rates." ¹⁶⁸ (My italics).

Faced with this authoritarian approach by the central government, which was also not prepared to force capital to help finance public housing, the local state embarked on the second prong of its strategy. It pointed to the fact that the central state was doing little to limit the influx of rural africans into the city and that this forced the council to issue more and more permits for slum accommodation in the city. The government benefited from the revenue derived from pass fees and manufacturing capital benefited from the existence of a growing reserve army of labour in the towns. The ratepayers of Johannesburg were, however, saddled with the housing of this 'surplus' black population. That responsibility they declined to undertake, with the result that slumyards proliferated. In 1919 the council complained that now even the new Health Act,

"propose(d) to transfer responsibility for dealing with infections of sick paupers from the Provincial Council onto the shoulders of the Municipality" -

an additional drain on the city's revenue. ¹⁶⁹ The Council also sent a delegation to visit a number of towns throughout the country. This concluded that due to the wage policies operating at the time,

"no system of housing can be suggested which does not entail a loss on economic basis, ... We think that the government should share in the responsibility by allocating the whole of the pass fee in the Johannesburg area for that purpose." ¹⁷⁰

The central government stubbornly refused to hand over this revenue. Meanwhile the police force also entered the fray blaming the local state directly for the outbreak of popular militancy that it was called upon to suppress. In 1919 the police force launched its own enquiry into the conditions that underlay popular militancy and concluded that the police could not be blamed for the disturbances as "it is not for us to house natives or control the conditions under which they live." ¹⁷¹

There had long been confusion over who was ultimately responsible for the reproduction and welfare of black working class but now the apparatuses of the state were thrown into complete disarray by internal bickering and the shifting of blame for popular struggles onto each other. The Johannesburg City Council's efforts were not helped by an extremely bureaucratic and inefficient structure. There was a proliferation of committees on the council and the "tasks of many overlapped in the attempt at slum elimination." The Public Health Committee

dealt with closing down insanitary properties, the Parks & Estates Committee controlled municipal land use, the Finance Committee controlled funds and the General Purposes Committee granted all the necessary powers to undertake slum clearance schemes.¹⁷² In 1919, when the council was comprehensively indicted by the Hogge Commission for its running of the Klipspruit location, the Parks & Estates Committee responded by abdicating all responsibility for black urban housing and demanded that the central government's Department of Native Affairs take over the running of all locations.¹⁷³ This breakdown in the structure and functioning of the state apparatuses was a reflection of the crisis that existed in the reproduction of the labour force and the underlying limitations on the ability of local apparatuses to deal with this crisis.

The crisis in the management, control and administration of black working class communities in Johannesburg by the state showed that rethinking of urban "native" policy by the dominant classes needed to be much more comprehensive. As a result out of the anarchic situation that prevailed two broad and conflicting policy trends began to emerge, each rooted in the interests of different fractions of the dominant local and capitalist classes in the city.

c) The Emergence of the 1923 Urban Areas Act

Two alternative programmes for the division and control of the black urban working classes had begun to emerge during the war, with the growth of a strong liberal reform movement on the Witwatersrand. Temperance campaigners, missionaries and welfare workers were prominent in this movement in which Howard Pim and Frederick Bridgman of the American Board Mission played a leading role. The Transvaal Missionary Association, the Diocesan Board of Missions, the Witwatersrand Church Council, the Temperance Alliance and the Illicit Liquor League were some of the organizations which supported the notion of reform in the whole system of black housing in Johannesburg as a solution to the problems of overcrowding, illicit drinking and disease that existed in the slums.¹⁷⁴ The movement was co-ordinated by an organization called the Rand Social Services League and it saw housing reform, slum elimination, freehold tenure for blacks in segregated townships and a liberalization of exemptions from the pass laws as a solution to black militancy on the Rand. The League initially had an influence over some of the apparatuses of the local state. For example seven councillors and the chairman of the Parks and Estates Committee as members in 1915 and in 1917 another five members were elected as councillors. In the same year the Parks and Estates Committee accepted some of the liberal tenets of the League and applied for £125,000 for the building of more houses in the new municipal location at Newlands.¹⁷⁵

The liberal movement also had influence over some enlightened sections of capital. We have already seen how mining capital began to consider the importance of housing reform after it held its Native Grievances Enquiry in 1914. (See p. 76) The Chamber of Mines and WNLA therefore gave considerable support to the reform movement and in 1919, WNLA showed itself sufficiently concerned about the crisis in the reproduction of labour to begin funding new research programmes by the South African Institute of Medical Research into the health of the working classes.¹⁷⁶

The growing size of the manufacturing sector also led in 1917 to the formation of the Federated Chamber of Industries.¹⁷⁷ The FCI soon came to play a leading role in the articulation of manufacturing interests and it also lent its support to the notion of liberal reform. Some sections of manufacturing capital were especially concerned about the stability of their work force. They thus supported the attempts at the time to separate black and white working class residential areas and to diffuse white worker militance by encouraging a suburban culture and nuclear family structures.¹⁷⁸ In 1918 a leading figure in the reform movement argued, in the context of the ravages inflicted by the influenza epidemic of that year on the working class, that,

"It should be remembered that the industries which are now springing up all over the Union, will probably involve an unprecedented movement of population, from the country to the towns, so that if these industries are to be carried on under healthy conditions it is essential that the question of housing receive immediate consideration."¹⁷⁹

In the wake of popular struggles, partly connected to housing conditions, the FCI in 1919 urged the establishment of a housing department stating that,

"amongst employers the feeling was steadily gaining ground that in addition to fair wages, good housing was essential to secure that class of healthy and contented work people without which no manufacturing concern could continue to operate successfully."¹⁸⁰

The Annual Congress of the Associated Chambers of Commerce in 1919, also urged the introduction of minimum wages and stated that "they could not have a happy and contented working class unless their conditions of life, particularly after they had finished their business, were happy and comfortable."¹⁸¹ It also recognized the inevitable existence of a permanent black proletariat in the towns and supported the idea of security of tenure for some urban blacks - pointing out that the local state in Johannesburg was empowered to lease location sites to blacks for 33 years, but that it had refused to allow this for fear of attracting a large and permanent population to its locations.¹⁸²

The liberal reform movement likewise drew some support from the central state's

Department of Native Affairs. In 1918 the draft Urban Areas Bill, drawn up by the Department, incorporated the liberal demands for improved housing, improved conditions for the black petty bourgeoisie and freehold tenure for blacks in urban areas. The Moffat Commission which sat after the 1918 bucket strike also favoured some liberalization of wages and living conditions on the Witwatersrand and was supported by the Secretary for Native Affairs, F.S. Malan.¹⁸³ A major theme of the reformers was that the local authorities tended to be too repressive in their dealings with urban blacks. James Henderson, a leading reformer went so far as to argue that "the local authorities had so narrow a view that they even ignored the advantages of cheap labour for industry."¹⁸⁴ The 1918 draft bill accordingly sought powers to compel reluctant local authorities to improve black residential conditions and to relax trading restrictions on urban africans and to ^{increase the number of} exemptions allowing africans to live outside locations. The 1920 Housing Commission agreed with the need to compel local authorities to act more efficiently in the supply of housing. Finally the Interdepartmental Committee on Pass Laws articulated some of these liberal ideas. It urged the recognition of a permanent black population in the towns, the abolition of pass laws as they existed and a sensitivity to the needs and aspirations of the black petty bourgeoisie. The Committee recognised this class as having been active in the leadership of the anti-pass campaign due to the fact that "skilled avenues of employment were practically closed to them and who in some cases have been reduced to living by their wits."¹⁸⁵ The Committee urged a relaxation of controls on this group. It suggested the continuation of contracts of employment for blacks but wished to exclude "all natives of good character, who have arrived at a scale of civilisation and education as no longer to require special measures of protection and control."¹⁸⁶ The Committee also turned a blind eye to the large and growing industrial reserve army on the Rand. It noted that a "loafer" class existed in the slumyards and that these people were actively involved in the anti-pass campaigns but did not recommend that any extensive powers be granted to the local state for the control of this "surplus" population.¹⁸⁷

These liberal ideas about urban policy, however, failed to take into account the local white working class and lower middle class opposition to the existence of a permanent black proletariat and industrial reserve army in the towns. The existence of these black classes in town threatened the white jobs, placed a burden on municipal rates and lowered the value of suburban land. For example in 1916 the residents of Booysens signed a petition opposed to the establishment of a location in the vicinity as it would lead to the devaluation of their property.¹⁸⁸ Local ratepayers were reluctant to support a labour force that supplied an industry that was by and large exempt from local taxes. The Housing Commission of 1920 noted

that all over the country,

"the local authorities would generally accept the principal of responsibility for the housing of their European citizens other than the poorer classes but in regard to the class known as "poor whites", coloured, natives and Asiatics (natives and Asiatics in particular) the general view appears to be that the housing of these classes is a matter for the state to attend to or at least it is a matter for state aid to the local authorities."¹⁸⁹

During the local government elections in 1918 the Labour Party was able to take control of the town council by campaigning on a slum clearance and protection of white labour ticket.¹⁹⁰

After the 1918 draft bill, the 1920 Housing Act and the Pass Laws Committee Report the local state intensified its opposition to these liberal tendencies within official thinking. A new demand, we have seen, began to be articulated - the right of local authorities to control the pass laws and to reduce the size of the industrial reserve army by expelling "surplus" blacks. In 1919 the Magistrate of Johannesburg, T.G. Macfie, who had dealt so harshly with the "bucket" strikers, called for a co-ordinated campaign to remove all africans without passes from the Witwatersrand - a repressive response to popular militancy that was in direct conflict with the thinking of leading officials in the central state's Department of Native Affairs.¹⁹¹

In 1921 the Public Health Committee adopted measures to get the powers to do this. It appointed Colonel Stallard as the head of the Commission of Enquiry to consider the possibility of strictly controlling the entry of africans into the city by means of setting up labour bureaux and of "securing suitable housing provision and general betterment of the conditions of natives, if possible without imposing financial burdens on the ratepayers."¹⁹² (My italics)

This Commission came to articulate, in a comprehensive form, the alternative programme to the liberal ideas expressed in the 1918 bill, the 1920 Act and the Pass Laws Committee. It became notorious for its central theme that the problems of urban poverty, unemployment, disease and housing were the result of "the great influx of natives - men, women and children - to town" and "the steady influx of poor whites."¹⁹³ It noted that this "unregulated mixture of black, white and coloured races in congested areas of slums is a cause of social degradation and evil to all concerned" and that the solution to this was an urban policy based on the "recognized principle of government that natives - men, women and children - should only be permitted within municipal areas in so far and for so long as their presence is demanded by the wants of the white population."¹⁹⁴ It recommended

that private enterprise be encouraged to build houses and urged the repeal of the 1920 Housing Act which provided state housing loans on the assumption that private investment in building was inevitably unprofitable.¹⁹⁵ However it agreed that the local state be "charged" with the duty of providing municipal accommodation for blacks but that this be strictly in the form of segregated locations and should only be made available to blacks "so long as they are in the employment of European masters." They advised that the municipality should set up a special Native Affairs Department - an apparatus which should be "constantly engaged in removing masterless and redundant natives from municipal areas."¹⁹⁶ It also urged the establishment of a permanent tribunal to deport and resettle in labour colonies the "idle and dissolute."¹⁹⁷ The Commission supported the old demand that mining capital be made to finance the provision of black housing and should release disused mining land for residential purposes.¹⁹⁸ Its reaction to the anti-pass campaign of 1919 was that an "essential weapon" existed in the pass laws and that these should be "maintained in their integrity."¹⁹⁹ Finally in order to ease the burden on white ratepayers the Commission opted for the municipal monopoly of beer sales and the creation of a separate revenue account as a means of financing the administration of the segregated locations.²⁰⁰

It is clear that these two conflicting currents of thought on black urban policy were, to use Poulantzas' terms, mediated "through the impact of popular struggle on contradictions among the dominant classes" and that they dealt with "relatively minor problems as well as broad political options", which included "the very state form to be established against the popular masses." (See above p. 67). The Stallard Commission, reflecting the fear of the privileged white working and lower middle classes of the urban proletariat, chose a repressive policy against all classes of the black population whereas the liberal movement and some central state departments favoured the strategy of nurturing and co-opting the allegiance of the black petty bourgeoisie.

In the early 1920's the local state rallied behind the principals of Stallardism and became increasingly vocal in it, lobbying for their implementation. In 1921 the Stallard Commission attended a conference of the government's Native Affairs Commission where the competing influence of the liberals was outmanoeuvred and it was agreed that, "the existence of a redundant black population in municipal areas is a source of the gravest peril and responsible in a great measure for the situation prevailing."²⁰¹

In 1922 the Native Affairs Department published a new Urban Areas Bill which reflected the balance of forces within the state at this time. The bill still con-

tained some ideas for the co-optation of the black petty bourgeoisie and included the rights of freehold property ownership for blacks. However, at the same time, it provided the local state with more powers for the expulsion of unemployed africans. Some african leaders were optimistic about the liberal provisions of the bill but in the ensuing months these came under aggressive attack from the town councils, and a month before the bill was debated in Parliament the Transvaal Municipal Association organized a conference to oppose it. In Parliament Smuts supported the provisions designed "to give the educated and progressive native a better position" but this did not prevent the Select Committee from moving a number of amendments which included the elimination of freehold property rights for blacks. The strength of white popular racism in the town²⁰² was made clear and Richard Feetham, the Chairman of the Select Committee, wrote to Howard Pim, explaining that "it would have been no use trying to satisfy native sentiment in favour of ownership at the cost of exciting the antagonism of the municipal authorities and making the bill unworkable."

The final form of the 1923 Urban Areas Act, which was to have a lasting effect on state urban policy, thus came to reflect the interests of the white petty bourgeoisie and white working class who as ratepayers and property owners championed the principles of Stallardism. The main clauses of the act provided for:

"1. Local authorities to set land aside as separate 'locations' or native villages (for the better class 'native'). This was subject to ministerial approval. The local authorities were also to house Africans living in the towns - or to make employers do so. Unexempted Africans were to be stopped from living outside these locations - and restrictions were placed on those in peri-urban areas. Inside these "... areas where only Bantu may live and where control measures can be readily exercised" the local authorities were to appoint superintendents and managers to see that things were running smoothly;

2. A separate native revenue account to be set up by the local authority, into which would be paid revenue contributed from (or extracted from) 'location' inhabitants: fines, rents, beer hall profits and contract registering fees. Thus, the means of collective consumption provided for in terms of the Act - as well as housing, and health facilities - were to be paid for by the dominated classes themselves. Slum conditions were to be eradicated, but there was to be no provision for sub-economic housing. Here the right of the local authority to prohibit all other liquor apart from beer and to maintain a monopoly over its brewing and sale was crucial, and was to continue to be so;

3. Increased control over Africans buying land outside of locations, although this was only stopped finally in 1937. The dropping of the freehold clause in the original bill was of course significant here. Trading rights and opportunities were also limited;

4. A system of advisory boards to be set up with purely consultative 'powers' and duties: with elected or appointed members and a white chairman (usually an official in the local authority's Native Affairs Department). Only registered tenants - and usually only men - were allowed to vote."²⁰³

However the 1923 Act was not a complete victory for Stallardism. Protection was provided for those africans who already owned property in town, employers of less than 25 workers were not forced to finance the provision of housing for their workers, the central state retained control over influx controls and revenue from the pass laws and, crucially the local state was obliged to provide alternative housing before working class communities could be evicted from the slums in town.²⁰⁴ A number of local factors also prevented the adoption of municipal beer brewing - leaving the basis of intra dominant class conflict over local finances open. These conflicts continued in the years that followed and were reflected primarily in splits between the central and local state apparatuses. Given these splits and a delay in the implementation of Stallardism the culture that was spawned in the slums was able to thrive and grow in the inter war years. In 1927 the slumyard population had risen to over 40,000 and this period came to be known as the Marabi Era.²⁰⁵ It is to Marabi - the culture of everyday life that was created by the people of these slumyards - that we now turn.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

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3. G. Stedman Jones, Outcast London, Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 160.
4. Some of the main works are:

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5. For an outline of the way this pattern emerged historically see M. Legassick and H. Wolpe, 'The Bantustans and Capital Accumulation in South Africa' Review of African Political Economy, No. 7, 1976.
6. W. Beinardt, The Political Economy of Pondoland, Cambridge University Press, 1982, pp. 5 - 6.
7. Bundy, Rise and Fall, p. 126.
8. M. Legassick and H. Wolpe, 'Bantustans and Capital', p. 99.

9. See above, Footnote 4.
10. Bundy, Rise and Fall, p. 191.
11. Beinardt, Political Economy, p. 60.
12. Bundy, Rise and Fall, p. 209.
13. G. Simpson, 'The Political and Legal Contradictions in the Preservation and Dissolution of the Precapitalist Mode of Production: The Fokeng Disturbances 1921 - 1926', Honours Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1981, Chapter one.
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15. Van Onselen, 'Witches of Suburbia', p. 17.
16. A Proctor, 'Class Struggle', p. 54.
17. Report of the Commission Appointed to Enquire into Assaults on Women, UG 39, 1913, p. 27.
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19. Tuberculosis Commission, First Report, UG 42, 1912, p. 129.
20. Report of the Housing Committee, 1920, U.G. 4, p. 34.
21. D. Hindson, 'The Pass System and the Formation of An Urban African Proletariat in South Africa', PHD Thesis, Sussex University, 1983, Chapter 3, Part 1.
22. P. Bonner, 'The 1920 Black Mineworkers' Strike: A Preliminary Account' in Bozzolli (ed.), Labour, Townships and Protest, p. 282.
23. P. Bonner, 'The Transvaal Native Congress 1917 - 1920. The radicalization of the black petty bourgeoisie on the Rand' in S. Marks and R. Rathbone (eds.), Industrialization and Social Change in South Africa, Longman, 1982, p. 27.

24. Bonner, 'The Transvaal Native Congress', p. 272.
25. Johannesburg City Library (hereafter JCL) Minutes of the Town Council, 1916 Vol. II, Report of the deputation sent to Durban by the municipal council to enquire into the housing of natives and the sale of Kaffir beer to natives, p. 653.
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29. De Noon, D., 'The Transvaal Labour Crisis, 1901 to 1906', Journal of African History, Vol. 8, 1967.
30. See S. Mcronev, 'Industrial Conflict in a Labour Repressive Economy: Black Labour on the Transvaal Gold Mines 1901 - 1912,' Honours Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1976, pp. 93 - 115.
31. See C. Van Onselen, 'The Regiment of the Hills - Umkosi Wezintaba: the Witwatersrand's lumpenproletarian army 1890 - 1920' in Van Onselen History of the Witwatersrand. Vol. 2.
32. Central Archives Depot, (Hereafter CAD), SAP Papers, File Conf 6/757/20/1/A The Inspector, Western Areas Johannesburg to Deputy Commissioner of Police, Johannesburg District, 3/9/1919.
33. CAD, Government Native Labour Bureau, GNLB 1, Chief Inspector Native Affairs Department to Secretary for Native Affairs 16/12/1902.
34. See Report of the Native Grievance Enquiry 1913 to 1914, U.G. 37, 1914.
35. Van Onselen, 'Witches of Suburbia', p. 13.
36. Van Onselen, 'Witches of Suburbia', p. 7 and p. 10.
37. Van Onselen, 'Witches of Suburbia', p. 19.

38. Van Onselen, 'Witches of Suburbia', p. 17.
39. Commission into Assaults Upon Women, UG 39, 1913, p. 13.
40. Van Onselen, 'Witches of Suburbia', pp. 45 - 54.
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42. J.P.R. Maud, City Government. The Johannesburg Experience, Oxford University Press, 1938, p. 59.
43. JCL, Report of the Medical Officer of Health 1919 - 1920, p. 35.
44. P. Rich 'The Dilemmas of South African Liberalism: White Liberals, Racial Ideology and the Politics of Social Control in the Period of South African Industrialization 1887 - 1943', PhD thesis, University of Warwick, pp. 155 - 156.
45. Bonner, 'The Transvaal Native Congress', p. 283.
46. Bonner, 'The Transvaal Native Congress', p. 284.
47. CAD, SNA, File No. 86/338/1919/F164 Mrs. Ellen Louw and 122 Native Women to the Mayor and Council of the Johannesburg Municipality. 29/3/1910.
48. JCL, Minutes of the Town Council, 1921 Vol. I, Report of the Parks and Estates Committee, 19/5/21, p. 330.
49. N. Kagan, 'African Settlements in the Johannesburg Area 1903 - 1923,' M.A. Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1978, pp. 33 - 34.
50. Kagan, 'African Settlements', p. 37.
51. Kagan, 'African Settlements', p. 38.
52. See Proctor, 'Class Struggle' for an interesting account of this township.
53. Kagan, 'African Settlements', p. 39.
54. Proctor, 'Class Struggle', pp. 58 - 59.

55. The three studies that have been used most extensively in this chapter are J. Lojkin, 'Contribution to a Marxist Theory of Urbanization' in Pickvance (ed.), Urban Sociology; Critical Essays, Tavistock Publications, 1976.

F. Lamarche, 'Property Development and the Economic Foundation of the Urban Question', in Pickvance Urban Sociology.

G. Pickvance, 'Historical Materialist Approaches to Urban Sociology' in Pickvance, Urban Sociology.

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A number of critiques, reviews and case studies using the theoretical approaches used in these works were also consulted. These works provided many of the ideas and concepts that influence the approach to urban sociology adopted in this section of the thesis. These works are:

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M. Barloe, 'Marxism, The State and The Urban Question: Critical Dates on Two Recent French Theories' in L. Crouch (ed.), State and Economy in Contemporary Capitalism, Croom Helm, 1979.

P. Mignione, 'Pahl and Lojkin on the State: A comment', International Journal of Urban and Regional Research (IJURR), Vol. 1, No. 1.

C. Cockburn, The Local State: Management of Cities and People, Pluto Press, 1977.

J. Foster, 'How Imperial London Preserved its Slums: Review of A. Wahl - The Eternal Slum' IJURR, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1977.

M. Barloe, 'History, Politics and the Local State' IJURR, Vol. 3, No. 1, Much 1979.

E. Lebas, 'Monopolville - The Economic and Political Logic of Capital' IJURR, Vol. 1, No. 1, Much 1977.

R. Bloch and P. Wilkinson, 'Urban Control and Popular Struggle: A Survey of State Urban Policy 1920 - 1970.' Africa Perspective No. 20, 1982.

56. Lojkin, 'Marxist Theory of Urbanization', p. 127.

57. Summarized by Pickvance in 'Historical Materialist Approaches', p. 19.

58. See Bloch and Wilkinson, 'Urban Control and Popular Struggle', p. 3, for a brief explanation of the concept 'collective means of consumption'.

It must also be noted that the concept of the collective means of consumption has been developed with specific reference to the era of monopoly capital where education, training, health, transport services and state welfare measures assume a much greater significance for the expanded reproduction of labour than during the phase of primitive accumulation. However during the early period of primitive accumulation the provision of minimal housing, health, recreation and transport services is still a necessity for the survival and reproduction of the working class and the continued expansion of capital. Urbanization, says Lojkin, is an essential component in the way in which space is used to provide these goods and services:

'The concentration of population, instruments of production capital, of pleasures and needs - in other words, the city - is thus in no sense an autonomous phenomenon governed by laws of development totally separate from the laws of capitalist accumulation. It cannot be dissociated from the tendency for capital to increase the productivity of labour by socializing the general conditions of production of which urbanization, as we have seen, is an essential component.'

Lojkin, 'Marxist Theory of Urbanization', pp. 123 - 124.

that other branches of capital may have invested in property and may use their ownership of land in pursuit of their own interests.

63. B. Bozzolli, The Political Nature of a Ruling Class: Capital and Ideology in South Africa 1890 - 1932, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, pp. 27 - 32.
64. Maud, City Government, pp. 283 - 286.
65. Maud, City Government, p. 284.
66. Bozzolli, Political Nature ... Ruling Class, p. 153 and Footnote 43, p. 325.
67. Bozzolli, Political Nature ... Ruling Class, p. 110.
68. This point and much of the above analysis comes from G. Bloch, 'The Development of Manufacturing Industry in South Africa 1900 - 1969' M.A. Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1980. pp. 74 - 86.
69. Bozzolli, Political Nature ... Ruling Class, p. 110.
70. Kagan, 'African Settlements' p. 41 and p. 177.
71. Kagan, 'African Settlements' p. 147.
72. Proctor, 'Class Struggle', p. 53.
73. Report of the Local Government Commission, TP 1915, pp. 28 - 29.
74. Report of the Local Government Commission, TP 1, 1922, p. 57.
75. A.P. Cartwright, The Corner House. The Early History of Johannesburg, Powell and Sons, 1965, p. 186.
76. Report of the Transvaal Leasehold Townships Commission, UG 34, 1912, p. 4.
77. Report of the Transvaal Leasehold Townships Commission, UG 34, 1912, p. 5 and pp. 62 - 67.
78. Report of the Transvaal Leasehold Townships Commission, UG 34, 1912, p. 63.

Sal Government Commission, 1915, TP 1915, p. 27.

... to the White Man's

93. JCL, Report of the Town Engineer, 1918, pp. 24 - 26.
94. A. MacMillan, The Golden City of Johannesburg, Collinridge, 1933, p. 183.
95. Local Government Commission, TP 1915, pp. 26 - 27.
96. JCL, Report of the Town Engineer, 1907, p. 56.
97. JCL, Report of the Town Engineer, 1911, p. 24.
This was especially due to the fact that the development of public transport allowed for the outward spread of suburbs where the availability of freehold property made house building more economically viable.
98. Kagan, 'African Settlements', p. 155.
99. JCL, Report of the Town Engineer, 1919, p. 24.
100. JCL, Report of the Town Engineer, 1915, pp. 22 - 26.
101. R. Krut, 'Housing Shortage ... Johannesburg' p. 5.
102. Report of the Housing Committee, UG. 4, 1920, p. 38.
103. A point about the state made by M. Castells, City Class Power, p. 18.
104. P. Saunders, Urban Politics, pp. 146 - 147.
105. Lojkin, 'Marxist Theory of Urbanization', p. 140.
106. Castells, City, Class, Power, p. 170.
107. Lojkin, 'Marxist Theory of Urbanization', p. 142.
108. Harloe, 'Marxism, The State', p. 137.
109. N. Poulantzas, State, Power, Socialism, 1978, p. 133.
110. Poulantzas, State, Power, pp. 143 - 144.
111. Poulantzas, State, Power, pp. 184 - 185.

112. Poulantzas, State, Power, p. 192.
113. Saunders, Urban Politics, p. 196.
114. Cockburn, The Local State, p. 59.
115. Foster, 'Imperial London', p. 98.
116. Harloe, 'Marxism, The State',
117. Foster, 'Imperial London', p. 104.
118. Kagan, 'African Settlements', pp. 17 - 22.
119. Kagan, 'African Settlements', pp. 19 - 21.
120. Krut, 'Housing Shortage ... Johannesburg', p. 2.
121. Marks and Trapido, 'Lord Milner', p. 63.
122. A. Proctor, 'Black Workers, Local Government and the State; Urban Class Conflict and the History of Three Johannesburg Suburbs, Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare 1905 to 1940', Honours Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1978, Chapter 1.
123. Krut, 'Housing Shortage ... Johannesburg', p. 11.
124. JCL, Report of the Medical Officer of Health, 1922 - 1924, p. 54.
125. Kagan, 'African Settlements', p. 43.
126. JCL, Report of the Medical Officer of Health, 1914 - 1915, p. 38.
127. Kagan, 'African Settlements', p. 54.
128. Maud, City Government, p. 54.
129. Maud, City Government, p. 283.
130. Maud, City Government, p. 74.

131. Report of the Municipal Commission, 1909, T.G. 12, 1909,
132. Kagan, 'African Settlements'. p. 44.
133. Hellman, Rooyard, p. 19.
134. JCL, Report of the Medical Officer of Health, 1913, p. 41.
135. Bloch, 'Development of Manufacturing', p. 76.
136. Bonner, '1920 Mineworkers Strike', p. 279.
137. Kagan, 'African Settlements', p. 44.
138. Minutes of the Town Council, 1916, Vol. I, p. 439.
139. Kagan, 'African Settlements', p. 78.
140. JCL, Report of the Town Engineer, 1920, p. 15.
141. Proctor, 'Black Workers, Local Government' Chapter Three and D. Coplan, 'In Township Tonite'. p. 111.
142. Report of the Department of Native Affairs, U.G. 7, 1919, p. 14.
143. The Tuberculosis Commission, First Report, U.G. 42, 1912, pp. 129 - 30.
144. Van Onselen, 'Witches of Suburbia', p. 51.
145. Commission into Assaults Upon Women, U.G. 39, 1913, p. 30.
146. C.R. Diamond, 'The Native Grievances Enquiry 1913 - 1914', South African Journal of Economics, Vol. 36, 1968, p. 214.
147. Influenza Epidemic Commission, U.G. 15, 1919, p. 7.
148. JCL, Report of the Medical Officer of Health, 1916 - 1919, p. 6.
149. Bonner, 'Transvaal Native Congress', p. 300.

150. CAD, SAP Papers, File 6/658/18.
151. Central Archives Depot, SAP Papers, File Conf 6/953/23/4 CID Office Johannesburg Division to Deputy Commissioner SAP, Witwatersrand District 31/1C/23.
152. CAD, SAP Papers, File Conf. 6/757/20/1/A. Deputy Commissioner of Johannesburg District to Secretary SAP, Pretoria, 3/3/1920.
153. See Van Onselen, 'Regiment of the Hills'.
154. CAD, SAP Papers, File 15/48/17 Acting Commissioner SAP to Secretary 20/12/1917.
155. See Bonner, 'Transvaal Native Congress', pp. 283 - 287.
156. Kagan, 'African Settlements', p. 80 and p. 159.
157. Bonner, 'Transvaal Native Congress', p. 293.
158. Influenza Epidemic Commission, UG. 15, 1919, p. 7 and p. 17.
159. Hindson, 'The Pass System', p. 58.
160. Report of Department of Native Affairs, UG. 1, 1919, pp. 29 - 30.
161. Bonner, 'Transvaal Native Congress' p. 286.
162. Report of the Department of Native Affairs, U.G. 7, 1919, p. 17.
163. Local Government Commission, TP 1915 p. 10.
164. Local Government Commission, TP 1915 p. 105.
165. Maud, City Government, p. 92.
166. Kagan, 'African Settlements', p. 149.
167. Kagan, 'African Settlements', p. 130.

168. JCL, Minutes of the Town Council, Vol. I, 1917, p. 386, 29/5/1917
169. JCL, Minutes of the Town Council, Vol. I, 1919, Report of the General Purposes Committee, p. 22.
170. JCL, Minutes of the Town Council, 1919, Vol. II, Housing Report, p. 629.
171. CAD, SAP Papers, File Conf 6/757/20/1/A, Sub Inspector, Western Areas Johannesburg District to Deputy Commissioner of Police, Johannesburg District, 3/9/1919 and Deputy Commissioner of Police to Secretary SAP, 2/3/1920.
172. Kagan, 'African Settlements', p. 153.
173. Kagan, 'African Settlements', p. 80.
174. Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism', Footnote p. 169 and p. 154.
175. Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism' p. 159.
176. Influenza Epidemic Commission, UG 15, 1919, p. 7.
177. Bozzolli, Political Nature ... Ruling Class, p. 144.
178. Bozzolli, Political Nature ... Ruling Class, pp. 201 - 205.
179. Cost of Living Commission, General Report and Report on Rents and Housing, U.G. 55, 1918, p. 44.
180. Bozzolli, Political Nature ... Ruling Class, p. 201.
181. Report of Housing Committee, UG 4, 1920, pp. 39 - 46.
182. Report of Housing Committee, UG 4, 1920, pp. 34 - 35.
183. Bonner, 'Transvaal Native Congress', pp. 299 - 300.
184. Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism', p. 160.
185. Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Pass Laws, UG. 41, 1922, p.5.

186. Hindson, 'The Pass System', p. 78.
187. Hindson, 'The Pass System', p. 78, and Committee on Pass Laws, UG. 41, 1922, p. 13.
188. Kagan, 'African Settlements', p. 136.
189. Report of Housing Committee, UG. 41, 1920, p. 39.
190. Proctor, 'Class Struggle', p. 56.
191. Bonner, 'Transvaal Native Congress', p. 279.
192. JCL, Minutes of the Town Council, Vol. I, 1921, Public Health Committee Report, p. 377.
193. Local Government Commission, 1922 TP 1, 1922, p. 9.
194. Local Government Commission, 1922 TP 1, 1922, p. 47.
195. Local Government Commission, 1922 TP 1, 1922, p. 45.
196. Local Government Commission, 1922 TP 1, 1922, p. 49.
197. Local Government Commission, 1922 TP 1, 1922, p. 45.
198. Local Government Commission, 1922 TP 1, 1922, p. 50.
199. Local Government Commission, 1922 TP 1, 1922, p. 52.
200. Local Government Commission, 1922 TP 1, 1922, p. 53.
201. Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism', p. 162.

In 1922 a Johannesburg town councillor told the Select Committee on Native Affairs that he opposed the suggestion to grant 33 year leasehold rights to africans on the grounds that

'we only want the natives in locations as long as they work in Johannesburg. We have no desire that they should go and stay there permanently ... we want to expel from our locations a number of loafers who are really doing no work at all. These people are at present living in the slums, and we don't want to be burdened by these people.'

Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism', p. 161.

202. Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism', p. 166;
R. Davenport, 'Beginnings of Urban Segregation', pp. 6 - 7.
203. Bloch and Wilkinson, 'Urban Control ... Popular Struggle', p.
204. See Proctor 'Class Struggle' and Chapter five of this thesis for an account of how these compromises prevented the destruction of the slumyards for a decade and the destruction of Rophiatown for three decades after the Bill was passed.
205. Star, 12/11/1927.

CHAPTER 3"WITHOUT VISIBLE MEANS OF SUBSISTENCE" - MARABI CULTURE IN THE INTER WAR YEARS

The previous chapter dealt with the factors that underlay the contradiction between Johannesburg's economic growth and the town's ability to house its black work-force, and the resultant growth of slums as the major form of black working class accommodation in Johannesburg before 1923. This chapter sets out to examine the way in which the black working classes experienced the conditions of life in the slums and how they created a new and vibrant culture out of this experience. Before looking at the nature of slumyard culture in the twenties and thirties it is necessary to describe the actual physical and objective conditions in the slums, to which the people's culture was a response.

1) Conditions of Life in the Slums

During and after the first World War the rapid increase in rackrenting and congestion led one report to label Johannesburg's slums as the worst in the world.¹ The sordid and unhygienic nature of conditions in the slums was commented upon by a number of contemporary observers. In 1915 the Star carried the following description of a typical slumyard at the back of a white owned cottage in Jeppe. Here there was:

"a yard containing between 30 and 40 of the worst kind of slum rooms and every one of the rooms is occupied. Considerable ingenuity has been shown in the squeezing in of the greatest number of these, and not a foot of the walled-in yard space has been wasted. The plan with all these places is to use the yard wall for the outer wall of the living room, so that only three sides need be added. Walking round the cottage you come straight upon four or five rooms that have not been thus treated. They have been built separately, quite near the back of the house, but the occupants may consider themselves the aristocrats of this yard, for they have windows in their rooms and some light."²

In the same year the Report of the Citizens Alliance for Liquor Reform - one of the organizations linked to the growing liberal reform movement quoted a member as saying in horror:

"there are houses once dwellings of better class white folk, now let out in tenements to the dregs of a mixed population. I shall never forget going upstairs in a house in street and finding a black man, a white woman, a sheep and goat all living together in the top room."³

In 1917 the CID took a group of liberal reformers on a tour of the black working class districts of the town. A report was produced which contained the following dramatic description of conditions in Kliptown, Malay Location, Prospect Township

and the inner city slums:

"Monotonous rows of sheet iron houses, many mere hovels on lots of 50 by 50 feet; the streets either dust or mud as determined by the weather, and of course no sidewalks. The utter darkness of night being a fitting picture of the black pall cast over the community by brazen sin, sickness and troubled hearts. Too often the word location simply spells a legalized slum with its rent and regulations, its superintendent and police ... If we pass onto the notorious 'yards' of the city we simply find every evil conditions (sic) intensified, worse sanitation and housing, higher rents more liquor and drunkenness, gambling and prostitution."

As the years passed, the black population of the town increased, the State remained paralyzed by its own internal contradictions and conditions in the slums got worse. In 1921 the Asiatic Inquiry Commission Report said of Vredejorp that "it is difficult to conceive of a worse slum existing in any part of the world."⁵ In 1927 G. Ballenden, the manager of the municipal Native Affairs Department, estimated that 600 families were coming into Johannesburg every year - a large number moving into slum accommodation. By that year 40,000 people lived in the slums and landlords were estimated to be making £40,000 a month from the lucrative business of renting these out.⁶ A year later the Star wrote:

"who that has been resident in Johannesburg for 30 years can fail to have noticed how slumland has literally chased desirable residential areas from South to North until we have now practically reached the northern municipal boundary? The transition of a mansion to a boarding house, and a boarding house to a tenement dwelling is a rapid and natural descent but still slumland continues its insidious course until one wonders if Johannesburg will wake up to fight its Armageddon for the possession of Parktown and Houghton Estate."⁷

Sanitary conditions in the slums were primitive. It was only in 1924 that the municipality began laying pipes for sewerage in Doornfontein, and Modikwe Dikobe remembers that 50 families in the Doornfontein yard in which he lived shared two "squat" toilets.⁸ These were never cleaned by the landlord and the women organized themselves to do it. Dikobe also remembers sleeping on the floor in the single room occupied by his family on old blankets and no mattress. Cooking at night did not take place inside but on open braziers between the shacks in the yards.⁹ The effects of these conditions on the slum dwellers' health were reflected in devastating infantile mortality rates for blacks in Johannesburg:

INFANTILE MORTALITY RATES JHB (PER 1000) ¹⁰		
YEAR	WHITES	AFRICANS
JUNE - JULY		
1920 - 21	110.03	615.74
21 - 22	96.60	481.43

22 - 23	81.20	571.12
23 - 24	82.95	565.12
24 - 25	78.55	unavailable
25 - 26	74.01	unavailable
26 - 27	83.29	922.74
27 - 28	83.39	891.52
28 - 39	unavailable	
39 - 40	52.13	579.87

These figures were between five and ten times the rate of white infant deaths and by far the greater proportion of deaths were caused by diseases directly attributable to social conditions - pneumonia, diarrhoea, enteritis and tuberculosis. The Medical Officer of Health's Report of 1929/30 attempted to downplay these figures by arguing that they were unrealistically high due to "the non registration of native infants born in Johannesburg" and the "ingress of ailing infants brought into the city for treatment."¹¹ This argument must be counter balanced by the fact that many mothers took their children, who were born in the city and contracted disease there, back to their rural homes so that they could die where suitable burial facilities were available. Dikobe notes that most people preferred to bury young babies in their rural homestead and that slum conditions made this practice very difficult.¹²

Despite the extent of disease no state provided clinics or hospitals were available to the slum dwellers. It was only in 1926 that the American Board Mission established the first clinic in the slum area of Doornfontein.¹³ This was followed by the establishment of another ten mission run clinics in the next one and a half years.¹⁴

Overcrowding, squalor and disease were the most striking features of slumyard life. They were all closely linked to another factor that was shared by the slum residents - the nature of formal wage labour in Johannesburg. We have already looked at the conditions under which accumulation in the manufacturing sector of the economy took place. Baruch Hirson identifies the three principal characteristics of wage labour that resulted from this pattern of accumulation. Firstly an extremely high proportion of african males and very few black women were drawn into the labour force; secondly a low proportion of african workers received a family wage due to capital's reliance on wage levels set according to the needs of single male migrants; and finally the "casualness of urban employment itself". There was a high rate of labour turnover due to the unskilled nature of work in the manufacturing sector and the ability of capital to eject old and worn out labourers and draw in

new and fresh workers from the reserve army of labour in the slums.¹⁵ This pattern is confirmed by Hindson who points out that the tendency for the organic composition of capital to rise was slight in both the mining and the manufacturing sectors in the period between 1923 and 1939, so that labour processes associated with simple cooperation and very limited machine manufacture dominated in the latter sector until the late thirties. He points out that the mines also created a large surplus population by using the labour of only healthy and fit men and by ejecting ill, disabled and worn out men into the reserves or the "floating" reserve army of labour in the towns - most of whom lived in the slums.¹⁶ The ability of manufacturing capital to draw on a flow of labour from the rural areas and from this urban reserve army of labour meant that at this stage the "physical debilitation of the urban proletariat did not in itself pose a direct threat to capitalist self expansion", although this did threaten "the reproduction of the African working population in the towns in a particularly acute fashion."¹⁷

In 1921 a report of the liberal body, the Johannesburg Joint Council of Europeans and Natives, showed clearly that the wages paid by industry in the City were hopelessly inadequate, based as they were on the needs of the mythical 'industrial male worker', and especially in the context of intensified rural underdevelopment. According to the report:

As a result of these (rural) changes, the natives engaged in town work looks for quarters of his own and perhaps brings his family with him. Under these altered circumstances it is impossible for the wages received ... to meet the requirements of town dwellers.¹⁸

In 1927 another Joint Council report estimated that wages paid by industry, ranging from £3 to £5 per month, fell short of the minimum subsistence needs of an average family by nearly £4¹⁹ - and this subsistence level was calculated on the basis of the rental rates prevalent in municipal townships, not on the exorbitant rents in the slumyards. In 1933 average wages for non-mining African workers were estimated to be £4-2s-0d per month, leaving a consistently large gap between the subsistence needs of a family and the minimum cost of living, which by this time was estimated to be between £5-6s-11d and £7-13s-10d.²⁰

This pressure on working class subsistence levels was intensified by the effects on the cost of consumption goods of the 1924 'Pact' government's protectionist policies. Thus in the late thirties South African butter was the most expensive in the empire and the price of South African bread - a staple item in African diets - was close to double that of bread in Britain²¹. Indeed in the mid-thirties the total burden of import duties on consumers was calculated at £14 million.²²

The decline of the productive capacity of the reserve economies has already been noted. The process accelerated in the inter-war years and the Native Economic Commission of 1930-32 warned of 'the creation of desert areas' and of appalling poverty in the reserves. It received evidence that 'it became necessary for young boys and girls to go away to the towns to earn money ... in order to buy clothes and to supplement the home food supplies.' At the same time intensified class struggle in the countryside and the forms of labour tenancy was causing larger numbers of the younger members of labour tenant families to desert to the towns rather than submit to the 'baasskap' of white farmers.²³

This rural impoverishment and the breakdown of the welfare functions of rural social structures along with the way in which labour was used in the mining and manufacturing sectors of the economy resulted in the creation of a large surplus population of unemployed and marginalised Africans in the towns. Figures for unemployment in the twenties are difficult to come by, but as early as 1924 J.D. Rheinhardt Jones, a prominent liberal, wrote of a group of workers who 'have become aged, crippled or otherwise incapacitated for earning a livelihood ... and ... the conditions under which some of them exist and eke out a precarious living are deplorable.'²⁴ In 1926 the Joint Council noted with concern that the rate of crime was on the increase due to unemployment in the city.²⁵

In 1925 the Secretary for Native Affairs was inundated by applications for poor relief from destitute African workers. Most of these were refused because a minuscule £800 per annum was allocated by the state to poor relief for blacks. Indeed rather than providing even the barest of social welfare grants to the black working classes the state chose to repatriate "redundant" workers to their rural homes - often attempting to reclaim even the cost of rail fares from the workers' families.²⁶ A typical application for relief came from Jim Mambo Ndhlovu of Klipspruit Location, whose statement reveals the plight of those individuals who now increasingly filled the ranks of the town's reserve army of labour:

"I Jim Mbambo Ndhlovu of Klipspruit Location do hereby make statement and declare:-

- I. That I came to the Goldfields at the end of the Anglo-Boer war (1899 - 1902) from Ingwavuma, Natal, and since then I have not returned home. I formerly lived in the old Vrededorp Location, and have been at the Klipspruit Location since its inception.
- II. That from the time of my arrival in Johannesburg till about a year ago, I have been selling snuff, and on account of my chest troubles and old age, I gave up that class of trade, and have since been living on alms from people who have known me (though not relatives but neighbours) for many years.
- III. That I have no relatives or friends at home at Ingwavuma, Natal,

substantial proportion of these people were women - between 1911 and 1921 their numbers in Johannesburg increased by 180 percent - figures which continued to rise throughout the twenties and thirties - at a time when industrial employment policy did not include women. These then were the origins of the slumyard population - a mixture of workers, the self-employed, the unemployed, the unemployable and the middle classes, of men, women and children, and of people from a variety of rural origins. It was particularly the growth of a large army of unemployed and unemployable people, struggling to exist in the interstices of the city, that had a crucial and perhaps underestimated influence on the development of a popular culture. Jerry White's concern to assert the importance of such 'lumpenproletarian' groups seems revelant here. He says:

As a category within Marxism the lumpenproletariat ... has tended to become an embarrassment to analysis, which has either taken it for granted or denied its separate and conscious existence. It has not been given a history - and so has been seen as having no dynamic and distinct role to play in the struggle between classes. The peculiar forms of that struggle, both on its own behalf and in alliance with other classes, have varied from place to place and from time to time. Like other classes it has taken on specific historical forms.²⁹

This chapter seeks to redress this imbalance as far as possible.

to whom I could go to, and therefore pray the Government to:-

- 1) Exempt me from Pass Laws.
- 2) Exempt me from Transvaal Native Taxes.
- 3) Place me on the Paupers' list and grant some relief as I have no one to support me. I have no wife or children.

IV. That my chest troubles disable me to do anything to earn my bread (for living) and my eyes are nearly blind.

I pray the Government to favourably take this my application into consideration."

During the Depression the unemployment rate for Africans increased sharply as many of their number were retrenched to make way for white labour. In 1937 the Director of Native Labour's report indicated that there were approximately 100 000 dependents and unemployed Africans on the Witwatersrand. Later in the year Councillor A. Immink declared that there were 93 000 people in Johannesburg and on the Rand who were "without visible means of subsistence", and who "live(d) by their wits, sleep(ed) with their friends at night and were not included in the census."²⁸ A substantial proportion of these people were women - between 1911 and 1921 their numbers in Johannesburg increased by 180 percent - figures which continued to rise throughout the twenties and thirties - at a time when industrial employment policy did not include women. These then were the origins of the slumyard population - a mixture of workers, the self-employed, the unemployed, the unemployable and the middle classes, of men, women and children, and of people from a variety of rural origins. It was particularly the growth of a large army of unemployed and unemployable people, struggling to exist in the interstices of the city, that had a crucial and perhaps underestimated influence on the development of a popular culture. Jerry White's concern to assert the importance of such 'lumpenproletarian' groups seems relevant here. He says:

As a category within Marxism the lumpenproletariat ... has tended to become an embarrassment to analysis, which has either taken it for granted or denied its separate and conscious existence. It has not been given a history - and so has been seen as having no dynamic and distinct role to play in the struggle between classes. The peculiar forms of that struggle, both on its own behalf and in alliance with other classes, have varied from place to place and from time to time. Like other classes it has taken on specific historical forms.²⁹

This chapter seeks to redress this imbalance as far as possible.

On top of these urban conditions of squalor, congestion, disease, low wages, unemployment and lack of social welfare the black working classes in the slums were also faced with the problem of pass laws that restricted both employment opportunities and mobility in the city. In the period between 1923 and 1930 new arrivals

in the town had to carry a workseeker's permit valid for six days after which time they had to leave town if they had not found a job. Those who did find employment were obliged to register their contracts under the Native Labour Regulation Act and the Service Contract document had to be carried and produced like a pass. Under Section 17 of the Urban Areas Act any authorised officer (including municipal officials and police officers) could bring before a magistrate anyone suspected of being "habitually unemployed" and such people could be sent to a work or farm colony in the rural areas. Women were supposedly exempt from the pass laws although from 1924 they were subject to influx controls as well. Although they did not have to register contracts of employment women too had to obtain workseeker's permits and could be made to depart from the urban area within 6 days if they did not find a job. The town council also imposed a night curfew on movement by africans in Johannesburg between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. and africans had to carry a night pass in order to be exempted from the curfew. Women were initially exempted from having to carry nightpasses but after 1925 they were also forced to do so. (See Chapter 4 pp.151-52). Certain classes of africans notably owners of fixed property, professional people and registered voters in the Cape, were exempted from the pass regulations - but in the 1920's the Pact government tended to be both evasive and stringent about granting certificates of exemption. Pass controls, especially those imposed on the reserve army of labour or 'surplus' population, were tightened by amendments made to the Urban Areas Act in 1930 and 1937 and enforced more vigorously by police action.³⁰ (This will be looked at more closely in Chapter 5).

These were the 'objective' characteristics of life that made up the urban milieu - a milieu that became increasingly, although never entirely, dominant in the experience of african proletarians and the unemployed classes. It was here, amidst the brutal conditions of town life, that these classes were forced by the sheer need for survival to develop an alternative network of economic activities to subsidise low wages and systems of social security to replace rural production and kinship systems. These were the experiences and needs that went into the making of slumyard culture.

2) Marabi

"The only way of fitting into town life was to get into Marabi ... They were urged by the conditions in the town. The environment exposed them to that."³¹

'Marabi' is the generic name that slumdwellers and others have given to the culture that permeated the yards of Johannesburg. It was composed of a cluster of activities that formed the foundation of people's defence against the exacting conditions in which they found themselves. It is also the name given to the music that deve-

loped in the yards at the time - a music that today still constitutes the distinctive feature black South African popular music and which "both facilitated and symbolised African social organisation and permanence in the towns."³² The middle classes of Johannesburg, black and white - who actively opposed marabi culture - used the term to refer distastefully to the working and lumpen classes of the slum-yards. According to one marabi musician, "sometimes when you quarrel with a guy who's not of your type, not your kind of guy, then he says to you, 'You Marabi, leave me alone you Marabi.'"³³ According to Todd Matshikiza, "Marabi is also the name of an epoch," the period of popular history before the effective implementation of urban segregation.³⁴ The term thus came close to describing the whole way of life of a people, the way they earned a living, the class position they adopted, the music they played and the way they danced.

The kernel of this culture was the beer-brewing trade of the yards. This can be seen from the responses of the women who lived in the Doornfontein yard where Ellen Hellman did her research, who told her that "Africans eat from beer."³⁵ Modikwe Dikobe remembers that there were six large yards in Doornfontein - Rooiyard, Makapan yard, Molefe yard (where he lived), Mveyane yard and Brown yard. There were also a number of cottages where 'coloureds' and 'middle class' blacks lived. According to him Doornfontein developed a thriving beer trade because of the diversity of its population and because of its proximity to the white suburbs where relatively well-paid domestic servants worked who patronized the yard shebeens on weekends. An informal "commercial network" developed in which "every yard in Doornfontein survived by selling beer."³⁶ The same situation prevailed in the other slum areas although Prospect Township, George Goch and Vrededorp differed in that they catered for mineworkers living in the nearby compounds. Indeed, beer selling was so extensive in Vrededorp that the area came to be known as "Skomfana Station."³⁷

In many traditional societies beer was an item of exchange as well as a source of nourishment and was used as a means of honouring and entertaining people. Women were primarily responsible for the brewing of beer mostly out of sorghum.³⁸

In the urban areas these social functions of beer continued in a new form. Women, in the absence of formal wage employment opportunities, relied heavily on the beer brewing skills they had learned in the countryside to survive. They began brewing beer and new kinds of liquor and selling these to the residents and domestic workers who congregated in the slums in search of entertainment on weekends. The development and growth of this trade gave rise to an extensive network of informal and illegal shebeens in the slums.

The shebeen has its origins in seventeenth century Cape Dutch society and the name derives from the Gaelic word for "little shop", used by Irish members of Cape Town's police force in the early twentieth century.³⁹ However in Johannesburg the slumyard shebeen developed more directly from the "tea meetings" that were held on Sunday afternoons in african elite and church circles. Here people entertained themselves by bidding for tea and cakes or by listening to their friends singing popular hymns and songs.⁴⁰ This institution was quickly copied and adapted to the needs and conditions of working class life in the slums. Some of the early shebeens in Doornfontein for example, were known as "timiti".⁴¹

The shebeens soon became the most pervasive urban institution for blacks. Brewing, because it was illegal, underwent a number of transformations and many more dangerous kinds of brew began to appear for sale at the shebeens. The preparation of traditional beer or mqombothi out of sprouted sorghum, mielie meal and water was a lengthy process that took 24 hours to complete and involved boiling, stirring, straining and fermenting the brew. Extensive beer raiding by the police made it difficult to brew mqombothi and other quick brewing concoctions were subsequently developed. These had colourful names like skokiaan or skomfana (yeast, sugar and water), Isishishimeyane, which derives its name onomatopoeically from the swaying walk of a drunk person, and was made up of potatoes, yeast, sugar, syrup and brandy, Isiqataviki or isikilimikwiki, which means "kill me quick", and was made of sour porridge, bread, syrup, brown sugar, yeast and bran and Babaton made of yeast and water. To all of these drinks pineapple skins, brandy and even carbide from old batteries were sometimes added to enhance their potency.⁴²

The ability of this kind of brewing and selling in shebeens to generate an income sufficient to bridge the gap between survival needs and wages can be gauged from the following figures. Hellman noted in 1933 that in Rooiyard the women earned £3-17s-6d and £4-16s-0d from beer sales a week - amounts higher than average wages paid by manufacturing capital. This was during a period when unemployment and a fall in wages due to the Depression had caused a decline in business, and before that women claimed they could earn £2 to £3 a weekend. According to Hellman "the real dependence of the family on the wife's beer trade is thrown into stark relief during times of unemployment, for then the family subsists on the wife's beer earnings, supplemented when necessary and possible by occasional loans from relatives and friends".⁴³

The amount of "Native liquor" destroyed in police raids is also indicative of the extent of this trade. For the years 1932, 1933 and 1934 these figures, which were only a fraction of the amount actually brewed, were 430 115, 568 807 and

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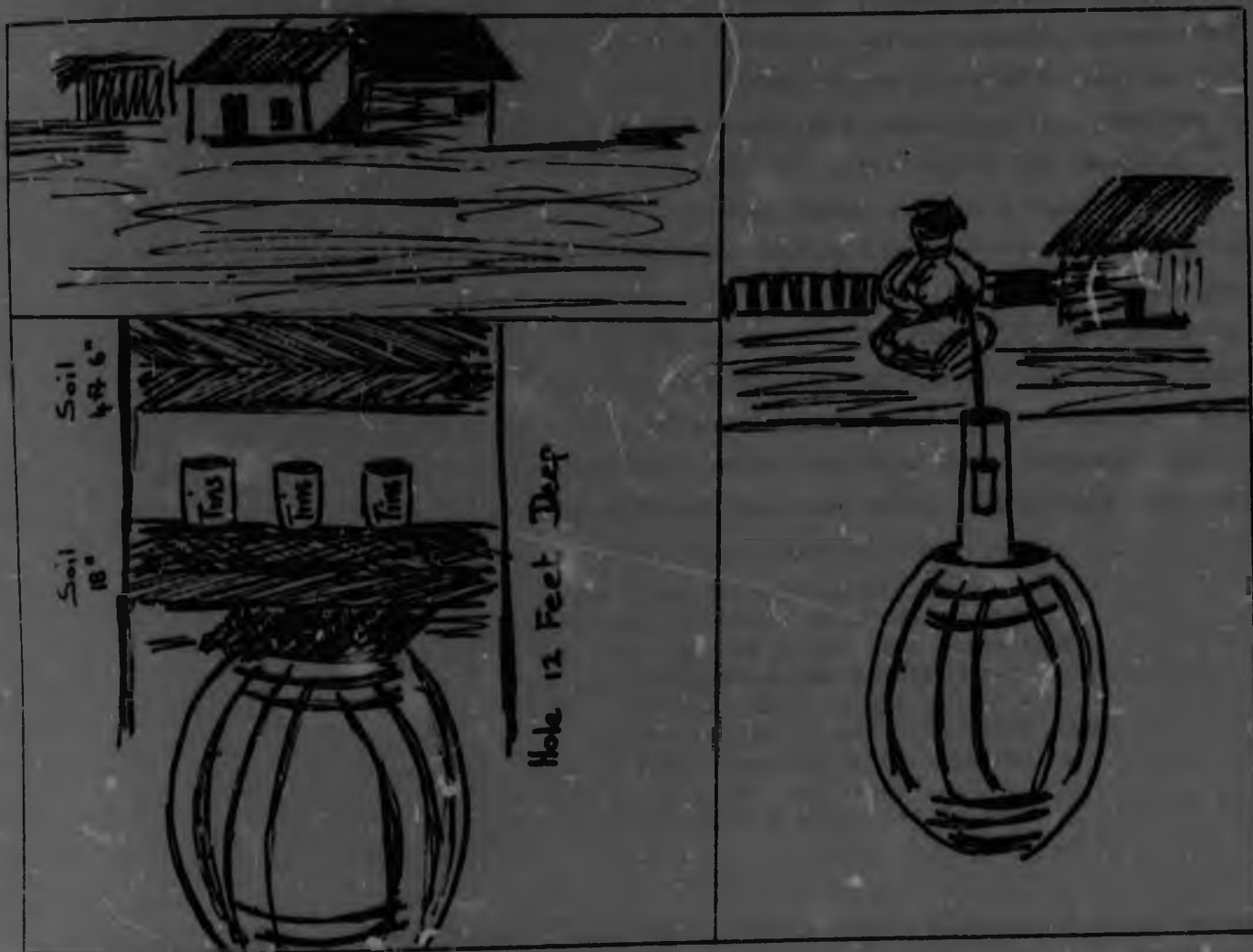
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381 351 gallons respectively.⁴⁴ As we shall see, after the council monopolised this trade in 1938, its beer halls were able to appropriate directly huge sums from this self-created working class form of production and use it to finance its slum clearance programme. In 1939 revenue from beer hall profits amounted to £32 029 and in 1941 this had jumped to £75 898.⁴⁵

The dependence of the urban working class on the beer trade for survival resulted in ingenious methods being adopted by the women of the slums to protect their beer from the danger of police raids. This is reflected in the diagram below:



'These rough sketches show the cunning manner in which the liquor is buried - a method that baffled the Police for a long time. A hole is dug 12 feet deep. Into this is placed a big barrel of liquor. A sheet of galvanised iron on top of the barrel supports about 18 inches of soil. Then come paraffin tins full of liquor and then soil. In many previous raids only the tins were found, the presence of the barrels being quite unsuspected. After the tins were removed by the Police, the barrel was tapped in the manner shown in the second sketch.'⁴⁶

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In one yard in Doornfontein the women residents dug a huge underground tunnel and

storage room for beer under the surface of an adjoining furniture factory - causing the factory wall eventually to collapse.⁴⁷

In Johannesburg these shebeens - around which the beer trade centred - did not operate in a vacuum and were accompanied by a constellation of cultural activities. Crucial to the tenacity and cohesion of shebeen culture was the role of music. It injected a vivacity into the marabi parties where women sold their beer and also provided an avenue of employment for numerous young men unwilling or unable to submit to the rules of capitalist employment. No marabi party was successful without some form of music. This ranged from an itinerant marabi pianist, accompanied by the rhythmic shaking of tins filled with crushed stones provided by the dancers, to small combinations of jazz musicians epitomised by a band called the Japanese Express, that had begun to play orchestrated marabi by the end of the twenties.⁴⁸ Even the police had respect for the marabi bands. After raiding a marabi party where the Japanese Express band was playing and taking the women to court the policemen were asked by the magistrate if the music was loud and discordant. One of the policemen replied: "Well no - is (sic) was quite good of its sort. Some of these bands are excellent you know."⁴⁹ All of this combined to create a convivial atmosphere at the shebeens that contrasted with working conditions in the factories of Johannesburg, as well as with the drab beer halls that were later introduced by the municipality in its attempt to monopolise the beer trade. Matshikiza, writing in Drum, gives a description of the vitality of shebeen life.

"Gashe ... was bent over his organ in one corner, thumping the rhythm from the pedals with his feet, which were also feeding the organ with air, choking the organ with persistent chords in the left hand, and improvising for an effective melody with his right hand. He would call in the aid of a matchstick to hold down a harmonic note, usually the tonic (doh) or the dominant (soh) both of which persist in African music, and you get a delirious effect of perpetual motion ... perpetual motion in a musty hole where a man makes friends without restraint."⁵⁰

This is how Wilson "King Force" Silgee, who lived in City & Suburbs and later became a famous jazz saxophonist, describes the times:

"Marabi; that was the environment. It was either organ but mostly piano. You get there, you pay your 10 cents, you get your share of whatever concoction there is - and you dance. It used to start from Friday night right through to Sunday evening. You get tired, you go home, go and sleep, and come back again, bob a time each time you get in. The piano and with the audience making a lot of noise - trying to make some theme out of what is playing."⁵¹

The itinerant musicians who played at marabi parties were often able to exist

independently of wage labour and in this way some unemployed members of the slum-yards had a crucial influence on their culture. The famous marabi man Ntebejaana, who is said to have fathered marabi music in Johannesburg, was an orphan without family support. He began his career in Vrededorp by playing the guitar and the kazoo in the streets with "Coloured" crooners. By the 1920's he had become a full time shebeen musician in Prospect Township.⁵² For him the shebeens of Prospect Township were possibly the only means of survival. However, playing for marabi was also a means of supplementing the family income. Ernest Mochumi, marabi pianist and later trumpeter for the Jazz Maniacs, one of the best-known bands of the time, recalls that:

"at Marabi you would sometimes find that we are three marabi players on piano. When you get tired the other takes over and you go and dance ... the owner of the dance would pay us five shillings a night. Ja, plenty of money at that time and free beer too. My father used to get a pound a week and my mother a pound a month. It was not enough for food ... there was no extra money unless I go and play for marabi. My parents didn't mind me going to marabi because in those years there were no hooligans and no thugs. You could go right through the night without any fear. That's why they didn't mind and they'd see me the following morning when I came with five bob sometimes seven and six and they were satisfied."⁵³

Zulu Boy Cele - another famous Marabi man was initially attracted to music because of his family's economic difficulties. He lived in the slums of City and Suburban and when his father abandoned the family his mother began brewing beer and Zulu Boy took to piano playing.⁵⁴ From these beginnings Zulu Boy became a legendary figure and went on to found the Jazz Maniacs band. The key role that these Marabi musicians played in creating the culture of the slums is reflected in the fact that years later when Modikwe Dikobe wrote his novel The Marabi Dance, about working class life in the slums of Doornfontein, he modelled George - a main character in the book - on the figure of Zulu Boy Cele, whom he remembers as a legend in the slums. The following fictional piece also reveals some of the factors that prompted men to take up instruments and make music:

"Not very long and hurry hurry arrived. It chased and caught. It loaded and hurried to a police station. My mother stopped brewing. She took to washing and ironing. She was in the bath before sunrise. On ironing to midnight. I left school. I was killing my mother. I played guitar and sang:

'Nansi i pick-up-van
Lapa na ngapa pick-up-van
Sizokwanza Kanjani?
Nanzi i pick-up-van.

Here's the pick-up van
Here and there the pick-up-van
What are we going to do?
Here's the pick-up-van"⁵⁵

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(Hurry Hurry⁴ was the colloquial term for a police pick-up van).

Later in life Zulu Boy cut a record out of one of his old marabi tunes and called it Izikhalo Zika Z Boy. Jacob Moeketsi, the pianist for the Jazz Maniacs spoke about how this song reflected the conditions of the slumyards in which Zulu Boy found himself and the spirit of the culture he helped create:

"This was a composition by Zulu Boy. His real name is Solomon Cele. He was a born musician. His gifts were great ... He grew up in City and Suburban just behind the pass office. You know that street - that's where he grew up and played marabi music ... that is his own composition. This composition in particular is a lament. The word izikhalo means a lament - the laments of Zulu Boy ... It's some kind of remorse and lament of his own. He grew up, from my knowledge of him as a younger man than I am, fatherless. He had his mother ... they were a struggling family and as a result he took to music ... It is this composition that seems to reveal or express his emotional content at the time. It is not as happy as it looks but er - we danced to it you know ... I mean the type of composition that a man puts down is determined very much by his environment."⁵⁶

Clearly the kind of cooperation that developed between shebeen queens and musicians in the slums was rooted in the subsistence needs of both parties. But at the same time this partnership provided the shebeen queens, musicians and the slumdwellers with a form of recreation that allowed one to try and forget the hardships and suffering of every day life in drink and dance.

Some of the dance styles that developed in the shebeens showed the extent to which people would go to find emotional relief from their conditions of life. In the shebeens of the predominantly Sotho area of Newclare a dance style called Famo developed where women danced provocatively for men, lifting their skirts under which they wore no underwear but instead "had painted rings around the whole area of their sex, a ring they called stoplight."⁵⁷ These parties also provided the setting for women to resort to prostitution as a means of surviving in the slums. But apart from an economic incentive the wild abandon of marabi dances like the Famo show how marabi culture, in its peculiar way, met the desperate need for comfort and relief that was produced by slum conditions. According to one of Coplan's informants who participated in Famo in the 1950's it was not only economic factors that made some women behave in this way:

"No it was a form of entertainment. At that time I associated with women whose manners were rough, wild. When I was deeply depressed and worried, in order to express myself and feel contented like a Christian would open a page in a bible, with me I went to the shebeen to sing these things. I had gone (to town) to visit my husband and I found him but we separated. I suffered a lot because of that. So I had to go to these

places and get some joy out of life and unburden myself. Others came for similar reasons, and to share their feelings with others ... they were just like me ..."⁵⁸

Ernest Morhumi remembers how the combined importance of economic and recreational factors gave Marabi culture a tenacity that defied police harassment:

"We couldn't help breaking the law because we knew that once the police find us we were all arrested. But we could not stop it. They used to sometimes come to the halls and stop the dance and ask for night pass. Then those who got the night pass are safe, those who got no nightpass are all arrested. The following day they just pay half-a-crown, sometimes five bob (in fines)"⁵⁹

Apart from playing this kind of role marabi parties also provided the context for the development of unique form of South African jazz. Here the marabi parties are strikingly similar to developments in American jazz. When European immigration dried up at the time of World War I factory owners in the industrial cities of the north of America began sending recruiting agents to the southern states in search of black labour. As a result thousands of black Americans moved to the north where urban ghettos like Harlem in New York and South Side in Chicago sprang up. Here rent parties also developed as a means of paying high rents and it was these parties that provided the training ground for some of the great American jazzmen of the thirties - including Fats Waller, Duke Ellington and Count Basie.⁶⁰

Similarly marabi was the place where some of South Africa's great jazz men learned their music. Zulu Boy Cele, for example, founded the Jazz Maniacs band which in the 1940's created a distinctive South African form of jazz by blending American swing with marabi rhythms. According to Wilson Silgee, who became the leader of the band after Zulu Boy Cele was murdered, the reasons for the development of this kind of jazz lay in the fact that most of the members of the band:

"were fellas who grew up in the ghetto, a lot of marabi stuff being played and so when they took up band playing we used to play dance numbers actually but then the beat we put into it would be the marabi beat. That's how they got popular. People were used to that kind of rhythm."⁶¹

This resulted in the development of a kind of jazz that was passed on to later generations of musicians which became a foundation element in black South African jazz. Marabi can still be heard today in the music of people like Dollar Brand, Hugh Masekela, Kippie Moeketsi and Johannes Gwangwa. Wilson Silgee highlights the point when he says of Dollar Brand's famous tune, "If you listen to that Mannenburg, if you listen to it, that's Marabi straight."⁶²

In the slumyards, marabi culture also involved the growth of an extensive network of

the people's daily life prevailed.⁶³ The process of brewing beer, for example, involved women in extensive mutual assistance. Women and young children would assist each other by looking out for police raiding parties. Both Modikwe Dikobe and Ernest Mochumi remember acting as child guards and giving the cry 'Araraai' when police arrived.⁶⁴ Women in Rooiyard would avoid organising parties that clashed with each other and friends would brew for a man who was ill or in jail. They would also help each other at marabi dances by selling food and taking entrance fees at the door.⁶⁵ If a woman was arrested during a raid neighbours would assist in feeding and looking after her children and would raise money to pay the fines to get women out of jail. Often this was done by a relative from the same rural area who lived nearby, but Mochumi notes that people in the yards were just friends, they did not need relatives.⁶⁶ This point is confirmed in the statement of Jim Mambo Ndhlovu where he talks of getting support from neighbours rather than relatives for many years.

As the process of underdevelopment struck at rural family structures, resulting in the large flow of women into the towns, the yard dwellers created new marriage patterns geared to the conditions of urban existence. Hellman notes that in Rooiyard twenty percent of the couples living there had not married by either traditional, Christian or civil custom.⁶⁷ According to Dikobe,

"Men and women were just living together because of their offspring ... Many such marriages occurred in Prospect Township, Pimville, Doornfontein, Vrededorp and Sophiatown, in Johannesburg and Marabastad in Pretoria. In Pretoria it is known as 'saambly', in Johannesburg 'vat en sit'. One does not find saambly's in country life. There every home is of bogadi.⁶⁸"

Hellman noted that a number of these couples would merge the husband's wages and the profits from the wife's beer sales. 'Vat en sit' was clearly the crucial means whereby the informal production of the yards and income from formal employment were harnessed together to provide for the working class family's subsistence needs. As a family structure 'vat en sit' was supplemented by the relations of reciprocity that catered for child care in the yards. This form of common law marriage also symbolised the merging of lumpenproletarian and working class values that characterised slumyard culture. Increasingly cut off from any subsistence base in the rural areas, women were quick to create an alternative means of survival - the informal economic and social welfare network of marabi culture.

Living in the yards also provided the unemployed with a range of other opportunities

to eke out an existence in the nooks and crannies of the city. Women actively resisted going to the municipal locations, because these were far from the European suburbs where casual work in kitchens or doing washing could be obtained - although this was not as popular as the more lucrative and convivial beer trade. Hawking of fruit and vegetables was also engaged in extensively. Men in the yards of Doornfontein could also supplement their income by making furniture and selling it to the white-owned second hand furniture shops in the nearby suburb of Jeppe. They could collect old bottles, tins and bags on a commission basis for a group of whites who lived in the houses adjacent to the yards and who made a living by reselling these items, especially paraffin containers, to the beer brewers and slumdwellers. Young boys could bring in some extra money by caddying, begging, pickpocketing, and selling newspapers on a casual basis. Boys from the various slum areas would form themselves into gangs of 'laaities' (those wise in the ways of the city as opposed to naive, newly arrived 'skaopies' from the countryside) and would jealously protect their areas of operation. Thus Dikobe notes that Sophiatown 'laaities' monopolised the caddying jobs at the golf course in Auckland Park and together with gangs from Vrededorp controlled the begging and pickpocketing at the market.⁶⁹

Like all slums the yards also provided numerous opportunities for confidence tricksters to exercise their talents. These were "gangs of youths born and raised in the ethnic mixture of Johannesburg's slums" who spoke a mixture of English, Afrikaans and vernacular known as flytaal or mensetel and lived entirely by robbing urban africans or by tricking them into parting with their weekly wages.⁷⁰

The need for survival in the city's slums did not always result in forms of cooperation and collective action on the part of the slumdwellers. However social crimes in most african residential areas in Johannesburg were, at that time, not nearly as serious and as extensive as the crime levels after slum clearance and the crowding of people into segregated locations. Modikwe Dikobe says on this point that:

"In spite of congestion, crime in New Doornfontein was insignificant. Police beat was on foot, a solitary policeman. Vehicles were not yet introduced in the early 1920's. The only crime regularly checked was illicit trade in beer ... I saw two murders in ten years that I lived in Doornfontein and Jeppe Men's Hostel ... Compared to today's crime, serious crime was very rare in Doornfontein."

However as opposed to these serious crimes:

"Petty crimes of 'back door bread' was still common. Stealing from an employer or any white was not regarded as crime. It was self pay back. Low remuneration was hated as legalized robbery. The word 'boroto' - bread, simply referred to taking of an article to sell it to find money for bread."⁷¹

This is a point confirmed by Ernest Mochumi when he says that his parents didn't mind him going to make some extra money as a pianist at Marabi parties because "in those years there were no hooligans and no thugs." This situation was in marked contrast to the violence and gang warfare that plagued the municipal locations in the years after urban segregation.

It is possible to argue that the ability of the working classes to develop a set of collective welfare institutions and a viable informal economic network removed some of the pressures on people to resort to serious crime as a means of survival. However in the late twenties and early 1930's ^{the decline of} ~~the decline of~~ production in the reserves, the onset of the depression and high levels of unemployment changed this situation by cutting deeply into the ability of marabi culture to compensate sufficiently for the inadequate wages paid to black men in industry. Numerous press reports at this time point to an increase in social crime. The Johannesburg Joint Council appointed a sub committee to investigate "lawlessness amongst Johannesburg natives" which reported in 1927 that:

"Your Committee finds at the outset that the bulk of the Native population on the Rand is law-abiding, the high incidence of crime being attributable to a floating population of unemployed, and in some cases, unemployable natives. The ingress of this class is caused by the same economic causes which have brought to town a large "poor white" population, in brief, a poor status on the land, and the greater attractiveness of town life."⁷²

As the number of africans coming to town increased and employment opportunities during the depression decreased serious crime began to escalate. In December 1929 a gang of thugs marched through the streets of Doornfontein's slums, robbing and terrorising the inhabitants, and then converged on Doornfontein Station where they attacked passengers alighting from the trains. As a result 28 people had to be treated in hospital for stab wounds and the police described the event as the worst night of crime ever experienced in the city.⁷³ In 1932 Umteteli Wa Bantu reported that recent years had seen a definite increase in crime and that a reign of terror and increased use of the knife by gangs was sweeping through the north eastern suburbs, especially Doornfontein. This caused Umteteli and members of the petty bourgeois class, whose views this newspaper represented, to claim that "respectable natives were not getting enough protection" and to call for stronger state action against the city's industrial reserve army.⁷⁴ This undermining of the collective resilience of slumyard culture by the depression was also linked, as we shall see in Chapter 4, to a growth of more aggressive and more militant political activity on the part of the city's black working classes.

classes

As conditions in the towns worsened the working^{classes} also developed more formal and organized forms of reciprocity and recreation to cope with the stress of urban life. Hellman noticed that women organized stokvels in Doornfontein - voluntary associations in which the members would take turns to receive a weekly subscription paid by all the members of the association. The pooled money was then used to organise a party where members attended free and non-members paid an entrance fee. The proceeds would then go to the organiser of the party as a means of accumulating larger than normal sums of money.⁷⁵ According to Peter Abrahams stokvels were:

"the trade union of the women who dealt in illicit liquor ... often a well known 'skoklaan queen' was sent to prison without the option of a fine. In such cases the stokveld (sic) helped with the home and children till the member came out of jail."⁷⁶

However, it would appear that these were not as important as the less formally organised shebeen and makabi parties that occurred every weekend in the yards. Dikobe argues that when people were removed to Orlando in the mid-thirties 'makabi came to a stop' and under the more effective control and restriction of the beer trade these parties gave way to the more formal forms of working class mutual assistance. Kuper and Kaplan provide some support for this interpretation: "That the Stokvel (more particularly) and mahodisana are today more complexly organised than at their inception cannot be doubted,"⁷⁷ they wrote in 1944. From their analysis of the operation of these voluntary associations in Western Native Township it would appear that not only did the nature of these voluntary associations change over time but also that the reasons for their differing characteristics were class-based. The stokvels in Western Native Township, offering the "items of a respectable middle class tea party" (cakes, biscuits, lemonade, sweets, jelly), often provided white-manufactured liquor and invariably had a literate secretary in charge of fee-collecting." The mahodisana (a less tightly organized form of rotating credit, meaning 'make to pay back') on the other hand sold liquor that was "more usually beer than brandy" and fixed contributions were a lot smaller.⁷⁸

Burial societies - the organisations whereby people attempted to ensure a decent burial for themselves and their families - were also shaped by factors of class and income. In the less impoverished Western Native Township, Kuper and Kaplan noted that 65 percent of households belonged to burial societies,⁷⁹ whereas according to Hellman only 10 percent of the men of 'Rooiyard' paid monthly subscription fees to such societies in Doornfontein.⁸⁰ Instead, according to Mochumi and Dikobe, when a death occurred in the slums, neighbours not only in the same yard but from all the surrounding yards would make a small contribution to the funeral costs. It was only when removed to Orlando that "people were detached from their close

relatives and so they had to have formal organisation."⁸¹

The other kind of formal organization that prevailed in the yards, and met the kinds of needs that Marabi was a response to, came in the form of the independant churches. According to Modikwe Dikobe there were at least three large separatist churches in the Doornfontein Yards - the African Catholic Church at 26 Staib Street, which he says was formed in 1910 after a group of Anglicans led by Reverend Rampedi split from their European Church and later split into a number of sects, the Molefe Church which was established by a Reverend Molefe who got the lease of stand in Staib Street, built a corrugated iron church there and gave the yard in which the church stood the same name, and the Zulu Congregational Church which split from the American Board Mission in Doornfontein in 1917 and which attracted a huge following in the slums in the 1920's.⁸² This church joined up with an earlier splinter group that started in 1896 in Natal and today still exists as a massive church movement.⁸³ The number of slum dwellers who became members of these churches is difficult to estimate, due to a complete lack of statistics and church records, although it is clear that the deep disillusionment on the part of urban blacks with traditional christianity made them immensely popular.

Some of the reasons for this popular rejection of the mainstream churches and the appeal of separatist religion are similar to those that went into the making of marabi. This can be seen in the split that occurred in the American Board Mission congregation in Doornfontein in 1917. Before the split the preacher at this church, Reverend Gardner Mvuyana, clearly allowed his church premises at 45 Van Beek Street, Doornfontein to fit into the cultural patterns that were developing in the slumyards. He allowed rooms on the side of the church to be rented out without permits from the Health Department and the yard around the church was frequently raided by the police. Wild parties were held on the premises and it was reported that on one occasion:

"benches were smashed, a table reduced from three feet in height to about as many inches, doors tore off from their hinges and the place made to resemble an American Bar room in the lowest quarters of a city on the far West after a free fight."⁸⁴

Mvuyana also allowed people to join the church even if they were living together in terms of a vat-en-sit arrangement rather than under a christian marriage.⁸⁵ These were practices that the parent church could not tolerate and it was pressure put on Mvuyana to "submit to mission control" and to remember that the church "was not a concert hall" that led him eventually to leave the American Board Mission and to take most of the congregation with him. Although Mvuyana and other separatist church leaders were clearly motivated by the financial gains to be made from renting church premises for accommodation and using it for recreation they gained

mass support more because the conventional churches were not responding to the forces that went into the making of slumyard culture. As one person at the time put it:

"The Church does not seek to prove Christ in the Monday struggles of the people."⁸⁶

In summary it can be said that by virtue of its tenacity and ability to humanise the brutal conditions of urban life marabi culture emerged in the inter-war years as the most pervasive form of working class consciousness in the city. Several purposes were served by the culture. Firstly, people's consciousness was expressed in extensive collective co-operation and in the perception by the men and women of the yards of being permanently urbanised and at the same time 'different' to the other African classes in the city - the petty bourgeoisie and the migrant labourers. The resilience of their welfare functions is likewise reflected in the ability of the yards to contain the impact of the depression. Although the rising crime rate reflected a breakdown in this function of marabi culture, Mphahlele still recalls in Down Second Avenue that, despite the massive unemployment of those years, 'for all that it mattered, the Depression of the early thirties did not seem on the surface to add an ounce of pressure more to the poverty of the black man.'⁸⁷ Finally, this culture sometimes served as a form of resistance, by providing, for example, slumdwellers with the means of temporarily resisting the attempts by the city council to control the liquor trade and demolish the yards that gave a home to marabi.

It is important, however, not to romanticise marabi culture by ignoring the limits and the inconsistencies internal to it. Here it might be useful to liken marabi to Gramsci's notion of "common sense", which he sees as an organic set of conceptions of the world that have both the "solidity of popular beliefs" and also a validity which is "psychological". They "organise" human masses, and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle, etc.⁸⁸ However, "common sense" is also extremely ambiguous, combining elements of resistance to the ideology of capital with a defensive or "corporate" response to the system of exploitation. Gramsci contrasts "common sense" with what he sees as the unity and coherence of the class consciousness that arises from "organisational work".⁸⁹ And certainly, in the case of marabi culture, for all its protective and defensive capacity, little "unity" and "coherence", let alone "organisation" may be discerned, at least in the early part of the period with which we are concerned.

It was in part the uneven development of capitalism in the countryside, particularly in the Transvaal, that resulted in a weakening of the coherence of this urban cultural form. De Noon has noted that in 1905 only 10 000 Transvaal Africans were employed in the mining industry out of a population of nearly 100 000,⁹⁰ indicating

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that the process of rural dislocation was effectively delayed in some areas of the Transvaal. Two or three decades later Dikobe suggests that slum dwellers from the northern and eastern Transvaal in Doornfontein continued to retain strong links with the countryside. He claims that a Bakgatla group collected a land levy in Sivewright Avenue in the early thirties and there was a Kgotla meeting in Staib Street, Doornfontein, to decide on the chieftainship of a village near his own. He claims that at the time of removals many families from his village owned over 100 head of cattle and decided to return home rather than go to Orlando.⁹¹ This is confirmed by Hellman who observed that a number of Bakgatla families went back to the countryside when Kooiyard was removed.⁹² The American Board Mission also reported that at the time of the removals

"a recent survey by a show of hands in a Sunday service showed that with very few exceptions our Doornfontein people regard themselves as temporary town dwellers with their base in the reserves."⁹³

This evidence of strong rural connections operating in the yards must qualify any romantic notion of marabi as a steadfast manifestation of urban or proletarian consciousness, resisting any attempts to remove its base in the towns.

The ambiguous role played by liquor represents one example of the inconsistent and fragmented nature of this culture. On the one hand it allowed for mutual assistance by the spread of working class resources; but on the other it exacted a heavy physical and moral toll on the people who drank it. Liquor did not help to contain the diseases that resulted in the staggering infantile mortality rates in the yards. Children also suffered in other ways. Although the mutual assistance networks offered them some security, the convenient vat-en-sit marriage arrangement was inherently unstable. According to Dikobe:

"The upbringing of children whose parents lived an unmarried life was disturbing. They (the children) regarded themselves as fatherless ... Their education was retarded. They lived in two worlds; city and country .. They were misfits in town and country society."⁹⁴

The widespread practice of prostitution that economic conditions in the slums encouraged and the attitudes towards women expressed in some of the marabi dances, like famo, are also examples of the damaging effects of marabi on people's dignity.

Sometimes marabi culture did express people's experience of urban conditions in an explicitly political way. For example one of the widely known marabi songs contained the following lyrics:

"There comes the big van
All over the country
They call it the pick-up-van

There is the pick-up
 There, there is the big van
 'Where's your pass?
 Where's your tax?'⁹⁵

However for the most part marabi culture was not an overtly political one and this may have in no small way been due to the hard-drinking milieu it embodied. Thus except for a few brief episodes, there is little evidence of collective attempts to resist beer raids, removals and the paying of extortionate rents.

The beer trade performed other functions - for while it did cause anxiety to some mining and manufacturing capitalists over the control and productivity of their labour force - it also operated to reduce the pressure on capital to pay higher wages and supported a large reserve army of labour. The Communist Party on the Rand in the thirties did, in Edwin Mofutsanyana's words, attempt to "conduct a struggle against high rents, lodgers' permits, beer brewing and other vexatious regulations," but this was confined to the segregated townships and was an unsuccessful attempt to use location advisory boards to mobilise support around local struggles.⁹⁶ The ANC was dominated in this period by a petty bourgeois leadership and failed to establish any organisational roots in the day-to-day needs and local struggles of slum and township dwellers - accounting for much of the passivity of the period. To this extent, whilst actively resisting influx control and urban segregation, working class struggles over the level and forms of their subsistence or reproduction in the twenties and thirties expressed themselves in a "corporate" proletarian consciousness - an attempt to "define and seek to improve a position within a given social order" as opposed to a "hegemonic" consciousness which "seeks to perform a transformative work over the whole range of society."⁹⁷

This relationship between a defensive set of cultural activities and organized opposition politics and the effects of marabi culture on mass political consciousness in Johannesburg forms the subject of the next chapter.



Modikwe Dikobe, his wife Betty and his son Sello in Seabe



Th. I - "John Do" 1914



THE L. C. "BIRD" JOY" J. 20



Jacob Moekatsi



Ernest "Palm" Mochumi



Mrs. Cele



An Early Picture of the Jazz Maniacs



Wilson Silgee (left) and some of the Jazz Maniacs



Wilson Silgee today



Scenes from the Slumyards in the 1930's



A Woman Making Beer in Rooiyard (from Hellman, Rooiyard)



Scenes from the Slumyards in the 1930's

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89. For the way in which these concepts are developed by Gramsci see Prison Notebooks, pp. 196 - 200, 323 - 343, 375 - 377. It is important to note that Gramsci did not make a radical distinction between advanced theory and 'common sense'. For him the task of Marxism was not to neglect or despise spontaneity. Despite its lack of coherence 'nonetheless the starting point must always be that common sense which is the spontaneous philosophy of the multitude and has to be made ideologically coherent' (p. 421). This is 'not a question of introducing from scratch a scientific form of thought into everyone's life but of renovating and making critical an already existing activity.' Gramsci saw the task of 'politics' and organization as being to link up with these conceptions of the world, rooted in popular experience, and to 'translate' into theoretical language the elements of historical life. It is not reality that should be expected to conform to the abstract schema. This will never happen and hence this conception is nothing but an expression of passivity. (p. 200).
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CHAPTER 4"MOBILIZING IN THE STREET": MARABI CULTURE AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION IN THE
SLUMYARDS OF JOHANNESBURG - 1920 TO THE DEPRESSION

Popular militancy and political organization in the urban areas of South Africa has often been related to inadequacies and crises in the provision of the basic means of survival for people living in the towns and the cities. Housing shortages, high rents, inadequate and expensive transport, lack of health facilities and food shortages have at various times, been issues around which upsurges of mass political mobilization and organization have taken place.

Chapter 2 examined the popular struggles that took place in Johannesburg after World War I and the way in which these were linked to severe shortages in the provision of housing and health services and the high cost of living at that time.¹ Chapter 6 will examine the bus boycotts, food riots and squatter movements that erupted in the city in the 1940's - struggles that were again linked to the inadequate provision of housing, food and transport for the working and other dominated classes in Johannesburg.²

The years in between these periods of militant urban struggles, were by contrast, characterized by a lack of any sustained political aggression on the part of both the black working classes and petty bourgeoisie in Johannesburg. The decline in popular militancy in this city was accompanied by a nationwide inertia on the part of the ICU, the ANC and to some extent the CPSA - an inertia that began to manifest itself in the late twenties and lasted, with some regional exceptions and with a brief interruption of militancy during the depression years, to the middle of the next decade. The post war militancy, which found expression in the Transvaal Native Congress' responses to the bucket strike of 1918 and the massive black miners strike of 1920 and its active participation in the shilling a day campaigns and anti-pass movement of 1919, had begun to fade by the early 1920's.³

Bonner suggests that after this date the organization of the ANC was deflected into the countryside at a time when rapid deflation and rise in real wages dampened popular militancy in the towns and real hardship was being experienced by people on white farms and in the reserves. At the same time, he argues, important sections of the leadership of the ANC had become susceptible to the conservative influence of chiefs in the countryside and the co-optive tactics of a growing liberal reform movement in the towns. It was a combination of these factors, he suggests, that left the leadership of this organization to "sink into the easy complacency of the

1920's ANC."⁴

The ineffectual nature of the ANC on a national level is referred to by many other writers. Walshe sees the period between 1924 and the mid 1930's as "years of anguished impotence" for the organization.⁵ This was the time when the ANC resigned itself to the state's policies of urban and rural segregation and confined its activities to sending representatives to conferences called by the state under the provisions of the 1920 Native Affairs Act, and to giving evidence to commissions of enquiry. Dan O'Meara agrees with this assessment. He argues that, except for a brief period of revival between 1927 and 1930, the ANC operated in the twenties essentially as an organ of the conservative african petty bourgeoisie, which concerned itself with constitutional methods of acquiring representation in the state and enhancing its existing privileges rather than organizing and mobilizing the masses. During the period between the depression and 1936 O'Meara argues that the ANC, reached a nadir as a result of its complete inability to respond to the state's attack on the limited franchise rights of the african petty bourgeoisie and to the state's increasingly repressive approach to the poorer classes in the towns.⁶

The Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU), on the other hand, emerged in the twenties as a mass based organization with the power to challenge the authority of the state on numerous occasions. However the power and militancy of the ICU came not from the towns but from its organization in the countryside. Between its founding in 1919, and 1924, when it moved its headquarters to Johannesburg, the ICU was based in Cape Town. Until 1926 the organization had a discernible urban bias with branches in 11 of the biggest towns of South Africa. In its evidence to the Economic and Wages Commission of 1925 it stated that its membership was drawn primarily from "urban and detribalized natives and also coloured workers."⁷

However the most militant phase of the ICU, which only began in 1925 and lasted until 1928, was a period when the ICU's recruitment in the countryside rose dramatically and its urban based activities went into corresponding decline. The mass militancy of the organization was focused in the countryside where pressures on labour tenants living on white farms and repressive conditions in small semi-rural locations were providing a potent set of issues around which to mobilize.⁸ By 1927, when the organization claimed a membership of 100,000, only one third of the ICU's 100 branches were in the large towns of South Africa. This decline in the ICU's urban based activities is illustrated by the fact that by 1926 the membership fees from Johannesburg had dropped to the level where the branch had a bank overdraft and was financing its activities from funds from the predominantly rural Natal branch.⁹ In the words of a journalist writing at the time, "while the move-

ment was confined to the towns, comparatively little notice was taken of it. With its spread amongst the farm labourers it caused a great stir."¹⁰

It has been argued that the vast and varied nature of the ICU's membership forced it to undertake a series of unco-ordinated and localized campaigns against issues like passes, repressive state legislation, shortage of land in the reserves and the prohibition of squatting on white farms.⁻¹ This diverse set of issues taken up by the ICU, it is argued, exhausted the financial resources of the union and sapped the energies of its organizers. The results of these factors were the ICU's "failure to adapt organizational methods to the demands made by a large and rapidly growing membership," its "comparative neglect of urban workers" and its activities being limited to meetings, resolutions and fiery speeches.¹²

The centrifugal tendencies set up by the vast regional variations in the nature of the ICU's campaigns has also been put forward as a major reason for the financial corruption, inefficiency and internal leadership disputes that racked the organization.¹³ These disputes led to the ICU's fragmentation into three separate factions after 1928. Despite a brief revitalization in the late 20's as the depression approached organizational turmoil and a lack of funds finally caused the Johannesburg office of the ICU in Ferreirstown to close down in February 1930.¹⁴

The performance of ^{the} Communist Party of South Africa did not follow the same pattern of national inertia that characterized the ANC and of urban inactivity that characterized the ICU in the 1920's. Founded in 1921, the party only launched a drive to organize black workers after its faith in the revolutionary potential of the white working class was weakened by the defeat of this class in the 1922 strike and by the cooptive policies of the Pact Government that was voted into power in 1924.¹⁵ This new policy of the CPSA mainly took the form of cooperation with the leadership of the ICU. Thus the two organizers who founded the ICU branch in Johannesburg in 1924, Thomas Mbeki and Stanley Silwana, were both members of the CPSA. Until 1926 the party did not attempt to organize africans independently of the ICU.¹⁶

However, after the expulsion of the communists from the ICU in 1926, the party did take steps towards recruiting and organizing its own black members. Lively night school classes in the CP's slum tenement headquarters in Fox Street, Johannesburg, a newspaper called the South African Worker and a new industrially based trade union movement were the main kinds of CP organization in Johannesburg after 1926. At the same time membership in small rural locations increased and strong party branches were established in Durban, Potchefstroom, Vereeniging and Germis-

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However, after the expulsion of the communists from the ICU in 1926, the party did take steps towards recruiting and organizing its own black members. Lively night school classes in the CP's slum tenement headquarters in Fox Street, Johannesburg, a newspaper called the South African Worker and a new industrially based trade union movement were the main kinds of CP organization in Johannesburg after 1926. At the same time membership in small rural locations increased and strong party branches were established in Durban, Potchefstroom, Vereeniging and Germic-

ton.¹⁷

In 1928 these trends were reinforced when the party decided to focus on the organization of blacks and adopted the "Black Republic" thesis. In 1929 the CPSA claimed a membership of 3,000 - most of whom were africans.¹⁸ However despite these small advances in the late twenties the party was weakened by a decline of its trade union organization during the depression and by a series of internal disputes and expulsions in the early thirties which left it with a tiny membership of 150 in 1934.¹⁹

The reasons for the comparative neglect of urban africans by the major political organizations in the 1920's, with the exception of the relatively active CPSA, and the decline and fragmentation of all these organizations by the early thirties are complex. Some scholars stress the petty bourgeois nature of the ANC and the ICU leadership as the reason for their isolation from the needs of the masses and of the urban working classes in particular.²⁰ Closely associated with this kind of explanation are the reasons which stress the effects of liberal ideology and cooptation on the leadership and tactics of these organizations.²¹ Another type of explanation focuses on the structural position and growth of the urban proletariat at this time. Bonner for example suggests that the partial proletarianization of many urban workers who were "not totally committed to their industrial milieu" might provide some explanation for the organizations' neglect of this class.²² O'Meara also argues, more strongly, that it was only during the years after the depression that a fully fledged black proletariat emerged in the towns and shifted the contradiction between the precapitalist modes of production and a capitalist mode of production to a contradiction located within the capitalist mode of production. This, he claims, was a necessary precondition for the ANC to revitalize itself and to drop its roots into the urban proletariat in the 1940's.²³

Taken together these explanations can be used to provide the outline of an account of the demise of urban political organization in the late 20's and early 30's in South Africa. However each explanation suffers from inadequacies. O'Meara's structural account has three defects. It is somewhat mechanical in its assumption that the organizational methods of the ANC unproblematically followed the objective growth of a large urban proletariat. It ignores evidence for the existence of a substantial proletariat and reserve army of labour, which had undertaken significant political campaigns in the towns, (Johannesburg in particular) before 1920. Finally it takes no account of the subjective response of the working classes to their conditions of exploitation in this period and the reasons why these responses did not exercise the radicalizing influences that they did before 1920.

Similarly the explanations that focus on the role of liberal ideology in the separation of political leadership from the urban working classes also beg a number of questions. Most importantly this kind of explanation fails to examine the material conditions experienced by the petty bourgeoisie and the reasons why this experience made this class so vulnerable and receptive to this kind of cooptation.

The explanations that rely on leadership defects and weak organizational methods are also superficial if taken on their own. These factors can in fact be seen as the symptoms rather than the causes of a lack of vitality in popular urban politics in this period. Consequently these factors themselves also need to be seen in the context of a lack of radicalizing pressures from below on these organizations.

This chapter sets out to argue that the widespread popularity of Marabi culture in the slums of the city is of crucial importance to understanding these political developments. This culture was the most widespread and popular form of spontaneous organization and consciousness amongst the working classes in the city and was also more resilient and deeply rooted than the political organizations operating in Johannesburg in the twenties and early thirties. The range of activities that made up Marabi culture became the predominant means by which the people of the slumyards interpreted their experience of the harsh conditions they lived under and whereby they organized the day to day survival of themselves and their families in the city.

The obvious question that arises is why the spontaneous generation of a popular culture coincided with a period of stagnation and fragmentation in the political organization of the poorer classes in Johannesburg and other South African cities. In the introduction to this thesis, it was argued that a people's culture - the way in which a group of people interpret their world and the way in which they act in order to cope with that world - both exerts a pressure on political organizations to respond to the needs being expressed and at the same time imposes limits on the range and forms of political organization possible in a given situation.²⁴

This chapter sets out to examine, more concretely, the interaction that took place between the range of activities and institutions that made-up the culture of the slumyards and the kinds of more formal political organizations and campaigns that developed in Johannesburg in the 1920's and early 1930's. The central theme is that political militancy in Johannesburg was displaced by a robust, resilient but essentially defensive culture in which people organized their daily struggle for survival around the collective but politically passive institutions of the shebeen.

stokvel and marabi dance. In Proctor's words, when one is denied

"any meaningful identity and social existence and against which one feels powerless to effect any changes, it is to alternate social and cultural activities more than overt political action that one tends to look in order to regain some degree of one's humanity."²⁵

Gareth Stedman Jones in his study of politics in London in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, has provided a fascinating account of the way in which a decline in the revolutionary activity of the working classes in London was inextricably linked to their culture - a culture,

"which showed itself strictly impervious to middle class attempts to guide it, but yet whose prevailing tone was not one of political combativity but of an enclosed and defensive conservatism."²⁶

This chapter attempts to demonstrate a similar connection between politics and culture in Johannesburg in the 1920's. It begins by looking at the way in which members of the african petty bourgeoisie responded to marabi culture and to the material conditions which they shared with the people who made this culture. This will throw some light on the political consciousness of these people who formed the bulk of the leadership of the major political grouping in Johannesburg. It then proceeds to give an account of the campaigns and methods of organization used by the ANC and the ICU in Johannesburg, in the 1920's, and shows how popular cultural activities bypassed the activities of these organizations - thereby absorbing any radicalizing influences from the working class and urban poor at this time. Thirdly it will look at the network of the middle class liberal organizations that operated in Johannesburg and which by intervening extensively in the culture of the slumyards managed to widen the gap that existed between the activities of the masses and the black petty bourgeoisie.

Fourthly a brief comparison will be made of political organizations based in the slums of Johannesburg and the advances made by organizations, especially in small semi rural locations and other municipal run locations on the Reef. It will be argued that conditions in these rural locations did not allow for the same cultural responses as the slumyards. This in turn weakened the possibilities for liberal middle class cooptation of political leaders and strengthened the potential for organizations to link up with and mobilize around the day to day needs of the working classes in these locations.

Finally the chapter will attempt to demonstrate that the poverty and harsh living

conditions in Johannesburg, which marabi culture was a response to, was exacerbated by the depression of the early thirties. This had the effect of undermining the defensive capacity of marabi culture and of mass militancy in the city during the depression years, although some organizations failed to permanently revitalize themselves after the depression and collapsed during the depression. However, the depression was crucial in prompting the state to intervene more extensively in the city, leading to urban segregation and to destroy the slumyards and the conditions in them in the years that followed the depression.

This examination of the interaction between popular culture and politics in Johannesburg will contribute in some way to the explanations of developments in the 1920's and early 1930's - especially because of the ANC, ICU and CP and the most lively institutions of life in Johannesburg - a city which became the centre of the period.

1) The Black Petit Bourgeoisie and Political Leadership

To understand the interaction that occurred between organizations in Johannesburg and the spontaneous culture of the city's slums, we will briefly to examine the effects of slumyard conditions on the leadership of black political organizations operating in the city.

All of the main political groupings were physically located in the city's slums. We have seen that the slums of Vrededorp were the major centres of TNC activity during the struggles of 1919-21, and to the dominant classes as the 'storm centres' of popular protest.
pp. 74-89.²⁷

for the more radical grouping within the Transvaal ANC - was based in the slum area of Jeppe. The leading figures of this grouping, such as Gumede, Mabaso and Letanka came to be known as the "Jeppe clique" of the ANC.³⁰ The ICU headquarters were also located in the slums - in a building called the Workers Hall in Ferreirastown. Kadalie himself lived in a cottage in End Street, Doornfontein - one of the most congested and characteristic slum areas in town.³¹ According to Helen Bradford, the ICU leadership in the towns experienced close contact with the urban poor,

"living cheek by jowl with other blacks in overcrowded townships, meeting them at soccer, church or dancing hall, and often forced by starvation into illicit beer brewing and repeatedly being rushed back into the milieu of workers and the marginalized."³²

The Communist Party also operated from headquarters which were based in the slum area of Ferreirastown. Early in 1927 the party refused to move into the more plush premises of the TUC in town. People like Sidney Bunting welcomed this as part of the move away from the CP's focus on white workers and towards more extensive work with the black working class. The Jewish Mens Working Club - which played a prominent role in the development of Communist thought in Johannesburg - was situated in Doornfontein and had a reputation for being ahead of the CP in the organization of nonracial cultural events.³³ The Communist Party night school was also run from the "ground floor of a slum tenement" in Ferreirastown. The night school was a major point of contact with the black working classes in the city and prominent communists like Gana Makabeni, Johannes Nkosi and Moses Kotane came into the leadership of the party via this route.³⁴

The leadership of these organizations were therefore acquainted with the problems of life in the slumyards both because they lived in these and because their political operations were run from headquarters based in the slums. Now it is a commonly held argument that different classes who share common living and environmental conditions tend to converge in their political and ideological responses to these conditions. Phillip Bonner, for example shows that housing conditions on the Witwatersrand were uniformly squalid and that members of the petty bourgeoisie and working class lived "cheek by jowl with criminals, prostitutes and other lumpenproletarian elements" and "the collective grievance over housing was thus one which could mobilize virtually all sections of the african community."³⁵ Helen Bradford also notes that experience of common living conditions was one of the ways in which petty bourgeois, ICU organizers were able to connect organically with the needs of working classes and the unemployed - especially in the countryside.

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imposed obstacles on the mobility of educated blacks, resulted in a tenuous tence for this class which often thrust them into the ranks of the unemployed marginalized classes.³⁶

Under these conditions the welfare and recreational role of Marabi was often important for petty bourgeoisie people as it was to the working classes. The presence of these cultural institutions in the slums certainly caused a 'downward' pressure to be exercised on the ideological discourse of the petty bourgeoisie.

Ray Phillips records the complaints of one of his 'respectable' informants while some women were "making a lot of money, buying pianos, grammophones and dresses Because I am a Christian I have to go straight, I have to stand day after day and kill myself washing."³⁷ The careers of some of the musicians of the time reflect the attractions that marabi culture held for the petty bourgeoisie. Solomon 'Zulu Boy' Cele, the veteran Doornfontein marabi man, lived with his widowed mother in a respectable cottage in City and Suburban but "his mother was very poor they were a struggling family and as a result he took to music". H.S. Bell the native subcommissioner wrote to the Department of Native Affairs in 1920, reflecting the temptations that the marabi culture offered to the petty bourgeoisie:

"There are the educated and skilled native labourers, many of whom are of decent class and desire to live decently, and many young men and women growing up of the same class, who have nowhere to go for any sort of recreation after their daily labours, nowhere where they can go in the evenings It is surely the duty of the Public to assist them to become respectable, and try and alienate them from the illicit liquor evil and other evils to which so many are driven As far as I know there is absolutely nothing being done to meet the requirements of this class, who claim to be the leaders of the natives and some grow into bitter agitators."³⁹

Umteteli WaBantu complained in 1923 that the "social abasement of slum life was responsible for much of the bitterness and unrest of town natives" and expressed fear that the slums would become a breeding for "Black Reds" and the "Bolsheviks" that they so greatly feared.⁴⁰

However at the same time both Bonner and Bradford recognize that the interposition of the petty bourgeoisie allows this class to be pulled in different directions by a range of conflicting social forces. Bonner points to the important factors in this process. Firstly, he notes, this class stands at the dominant relations of production of capitalism (the capital/labour relation) and as such is pulled two ways. Secondly, he quotes Laclau to point out

"the more separated is a social sector from the dominant relations of production the more diffuse are its 'objective interests' and, consequently, less developed its 'class instinct' the more evolution and the resolution of the crises will tend to take place on the ideological level."⁴¹

And thirdly he argues that the specific nature of racial discrimination in South Africa imposed severe limitations on the mobility and 'upward' identification of this class.⁴² The actual formation of the ideology and consciousness of this class, however, is an everchanging process that depends largely on the balance of class forces operating at any particular moment in time - only the day-to-day flux of the class struggle, and the respective pressures and inducements offered by the main protagonists in the conflict - capital and labour - would determine the eventual position of the petty bourgeoisie.⁴³

Housing was an issue especially prone to these conflicting pressures. Even before 1920 "educated and civilized" blacks trying to build a stable family existence in the towns articulated a desire to escape the housing conditions they were forced to live in and this opened up a variety of opportunities for the dominant classes to detach these people from the radical populist alliance that emerged in 1918 and 1919. In the twenties a number of activities were undertaken by the liberal movement which explicitly used promises of housing reform as a means of coopting the petty bourgeoisie and this ideological use of the slum issue reinforced the inducements that pulled the petty bourgeoisie away from the working classes. In the twenties the petty bourgeoisie manifested an increasing affinity for liberal ideas on housing and a distaste for the way of life in the slums. This divergence from the working classes' methods of coping with slum conditions partially accounts for the ambiguous and fragmented nature of political activity in the city at this time.

The next section deals with the major activities of the ICU and ANC in the city during the 1920's and examines the manner in which these activities were affected by the culture of the slumyards.

2) The ICU and ANC in Johannesburg in the 20's

Bradford makes the point that the 'petty bourgeoisie' cannot be treated as a simple and homogenous category - it was in fact a very complex and fluid grouping made up of many strata and fractions and characterized by much movement of its members into and out of other social classes. She notes that much of the leadership of the ICU consisted of petty bourgeois africans. People like A.W.G. Champion, the Natal leader of the ICU and Henry Tyamzashe, the Lovedale educated printer and editor of

the Workers Herald, occupied leading positions in the local Johannesburg branch in the 20's. Many of these ICU leaders had their political training in the ANC and two-thirds of the delegates to the ICU annual conference in 1927 were Congress members. However at the same time the leadership of the ICU frequently poured scorn on the "old brigade" of the ANC, which they saw as a "good boys club" composed of the "upper stratum of native bourgeoisie."⁴⁴ (sic)

Bradford explains this rift in the attitudes of the elite political leadership by looking at a number of factors. The ICU leadership self consciously distanced itself from the ANC in terms of age. The younger educated members of the petty bourgeoisie, she argues, had not established themselves in professional or commercial activities and were more subject to the government's increasing denial of privileges, pass exemptions and trading outlets to "civilized" africans. Younger educated africans were also confronted by the growing shortage of skilled jobs in the towns and increasing difficulty of buying land in the countryside. In 1927 pressure from white farmers that "exemptions be more restricted" was given legislative force and this was felt most heavily by the young members of the black elite who were moving into the towns for the first time.⁴⁵

The ICU with its militant rhetoric, rather than the staid and conservative ANC, appealed more to these people and the infusion of younger more educated africans into the ICU in Johannesburg accounts for the eclectic mix of moderation and radicalism in ICU politics in the city at this time.

The ICU leadership was close enough to the experience of the urban working classes to realize the economic importance of living close to one's place of work - a major factor in the popularity of the slumyards amongst the urban poor. Thus the ICU, at least verbally, was strongly critical of state attempts to move people to segregated municipal locations far out of town, under the Urban Areas Act. Thus an official publication of the ICU condemned the Act as:

"another example of the unjust laws affecting the natives. This Act gives the local authorities power to force the native to leave the towns and go and live in the locations. This compels the native to live many miles away from his work and as a native is not allowed to ride on a municipal train or bus (sic) with the exception of the Cape Province and Natal, it means that he has to walk three to ten miles before he can get to his work. The

In the twenties pressure from white workers, homeowners and members of the white petty bourgeoisie resulted in the Johannesburg town council pushing for amendments to the 1925 Urban Areas Act that would allow for more effective implementation of urban segregation and slum clearance. (See below, pp. 144-147). The ICU was active in opposing this drive from the local state - both verbally and in practice.

In October 1927 the Secretary for Native Affairs received a telegram from the ICU noting that a mass meeting in Johannesburg viewed "with regret the determined attitude of the Johannesburg Town Council in openly following the policy of oppression" and its attempt to "make all the natives of Johannesburg law breakers or homeless wanderers."⁴⁷

The ICU also shrewdly identified the contradictions in the state's ability to implement urban segregation and organized a number of legal cases which were successful in obstructing the attempt to segregate the suburbs of Johannesburg.

There were two major contradictions restraining the effective implementation of urban segregation in the 1920's. The town council lacked the funds to provide adequate alternative housing in the municipal locations for people affected by eviction from the slums and the central state was reluctant to provide the financial assistance for this. The central government's Department of Native Affairs was also much more concerned than the local state to prevent the destabilizing effects of a harsh Stallardist programme of slum clearance on the city's black petty bourgeoisie - especially while the militancy of the post War 1 urban struggles was fresh in their minds (See Chapter 5 pp. 144-147).

The ICU took advantage of these contradictions and repeatedly challenged the validity of proclamations of Johannesburg or part of it under the Urban Areas Act. In 1924, when Johannesburg was proclaimed under the Urban Areas Act for the first time, the Supreme Court ruled the proclamation ultra vires due to a technical defect.⁴⁸ In December 1926 the ICU challenged a second proclamation in the Supreme Court which again ruled in favour of the slum dwellers. It declared the 1924 proclamation ultra vires, this time on the grounds that the town council was unable to offer adequate accommodation for the number of people threatened with removal under the proclamation.⁴⁹

Early in 1927 another proclamation which threatened the removal of 10,000 people from the slums was issued. The newspaper Umteteli WaBantu reported that "the whole Bantu population affected under the proclamation is astir."⁵⁰ The ICU responded to this spirit of popular indignation by organizing mass meetings, by promising to

organize mass applications for alternative accommodation (which it knew to be unavailable) and by threatening a legal campaign to contest the validity of the proclamation if this alternative housing was not made available. As a result of these campaigns and the ICU's legal strategy, the 1927 proclamation was also declared ultra vires and the slumyards and their culture, were given a new lease of life.

The low T state was consequently forced to rely on piecemeal proclamations of particular slum areas and on the promulgation of insanitary demolition orders for individual properties as an alternative method. The pace of slum clearance was slowed down as a result and the urban poor were able to respond by simply moving to slum areas in the city that did not fall under the proclamation.

The ICU also attempted to challenge the proclamation of particular parts of the city. In June 1927 a large area of Ferreirstown was proclaimed under the Urban Areas Act and the ICU telegraphed the Secretary for Native Affairs and sent a delegation to the town council "to request that the Act not be applied to Ferreirstown."⁵¹

The ICU also initiated an action in the Appellate Division on the grounds that no hostels for those single women affected by the proclamation were available. On this occasion it was unsuccessful and the council was able to proceed with the eviction of people from the Ferreirstown slumyards.⁵²

Apart from legal and constitutional measures the ICU in Johannesburg was also involved in a number of other disputes that were related to grievances over housing conditions. In 1927 400 ICU members at Kazerne Railway Goods Shed went on strike in demand of wage increases - and because they had to sleep in the Railway compounds while they had wives living in other parts of town. The ICU leaderships role in the strike was however insignificant and ineffective. H. Tyamzashe, the ICU's Complaints and Research Secretary, undertook two visits to the scene of the strike and on both occasions urged the workers to go back to work. In the end all 400 strikers were dismissed and easily replaced by the railway administration.⁵³

The other major strike, over housing, was the strike at the General Post Office in November 1928. Here ICU members struck because of the heavy workload in the post office and congestion and poor living conditions in the compound in which they lived. The ICU, through the intervention of the Trade Union Congress, managed to persuade Walter Madeley, the Minister of Labour in the Pact government, to negotiate over these issues - an event which led to his expulsion from Herzog's cabinet

and to a minor crisis in government circles. In the wake of this furore the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs did grant some concessions to the workers and these included improvements to conditions in the compound.⁵⁴

In 1929, after the ICU had disintegrated into three separate factions, the independent ICU under Kadalie also took up the issue of high rents in Prospect Township. Rent Board inspections of slum conditions in the area followed along with a tour by the Minister of Native Affairs and Johannesburg City Councillors of the slumyards. This isolated action did not, however, have any significant results.⁵⁵

The other major campaigns undertaken by the ICU in Johannesburg revolved around the Pact Government's attempt to introduce night passes for women in 1925. Popular anger flared up in response to this issue which promised to affect all classes living in the city and threatened to cut into the informal economic activities that were integral to the slumyard culture of the twenties. Newspapers reported that some of the "agitation against passes for women comes from men who fear that their (beer) trade will be interfered with". They added, all along the Reef, "the natives are raised to a high pitch of indignation."⁵⁶ The effect of this was briefly to encourage the ICU and ANC leadership to respond to the masses. The ICU organized meetings where it recalled the militancy of the 1919 anti-pass campaigns and even the moderate ANC was reported to have its "work cut-out" trying to contain the influence of the more radical faction within it over the issue.⁵⁷ The Johannesburg Joint Council of Europeans and Natives were, as a result unable to pull the ANC leadership into its own anti night-pass campaign which stressed, in typically liberal fashion, the effects of night passes on decent and law abiding african women and the interest that some sections of capital had in a simplification of the pass laws because - as they later argued - "arrests of native workers under the pass laws are a cause of great inconvenience to employers."⁵⁸

However, in the end, this pressure from below was not sufficiently extensive or sustained to deflect these organizations from their established patterns of protest. Meetings held under ICU auspices at the Inchape Hall in Sophiatown and in Doornfontein resolved, in familiar ICU fashion, to select ten women to defy the law and then to test it's validity by appealing against the decision of the magistrate. On this occasion even the conservative, Umteteli WaBantu, derided these methods and claimed that "this programme appears to have ended where it began, for nothing has yet been heard of the arrests of these sacrificial women."⁵⁹

The response of the Transvaal ANC to the state's attempt to demolish the slumyards and to introduce night passes for women reflects the national degeneration

and stagnation of the organization. After the failure of the 1918 and 1919 campaigns in Johannesburg, the militant faction within the ANC, which grouped itself around the newspaper Abantu Batho, began to lose its influence on the direction of the organization, and the balance of power within the leadership shifted dramatically in favour of the moderates who wanted a return to the old policy of negotiations.⁶⁰

In 1918 the South African Native National Congress had made a firm stand against residential segregation in the towns of South Africa and had strongly opposed the segregatory provisions of the draft bill of 1918 on urban african policy. By 1922 things had changed. In this year the Smuts government called its first 'Native Conference' to discuss the draft of the Natives (Urban Areas) Bill and the ANC was now ready to negotiate on the details of urban segregation and local control which the bill contained.⁶¹ The leadership of the ANC was, of course, bitterly disappointed with the first form of the bill - especially the clauses which eliminated the possibilities for freehold land ownership in the municipal townships. After the bill was introduced in parliament the ANC met in Bloemfontein and expressed its disappointment with and outrage at these provisions of the bill. In the Transvaal Selby Msimang tried to call for a general strike "of all the people from Randfontein to Springs" but found that, unlike the pre 1920 period, the working classes were not prepared to come out in support of this call from the petty bourgeoisie - a clear indication that the scope for populist politics had considerably diminished by the early 20's. In the end all the ANC did was send a delegation, led by Selope Thema and Gumede, to discuss these grievances with Smuts while the bill was being passed through parliament in 1922.⁶²

When the bill was finally passed the ANC leadership was prepared to accept it on condition that minor concessions like improved location housing and trading rights for the petty bourgeoisie were granted. Selope Thema editorialized in Umteteli WaBantu that africans should take "what we can get and use it to make the government give us what we want."⁶³ The petty bourgeois nature of these demands and the effect of 'consultation' with the government was captured clearly in the next edition of the newspaper which commented on the Urban Areas Act in the following way:

"As a housing measure the Act has wonderful possibilities the social abasement of slum life is responsible for much of the bitterness and unrest of town natives. It is the sordid environment, the squalor and the compulsory contact with undesirable human types which blunt the moral sense and engender discontent and despair. It is an axiom that man is the reflection of his surroundings and when we consider the abominations of the town slums it is amazing to find that there are so many natives of character and

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worth who have survived their blasting influence. The conditions under which town natives live are not conducive to a healthy mind or body and it is pleasant to contemplate the relief which the Urban Areas Act promises."⁶⁴

Unlike the ICU which did effectively exploit contradictions within the state to delay the implementation of the 1923 Act the ANC did little beyond making these verbal and constitutional gestures. For example, at the time of the first attempted proclamation of Johannesburg, under the Act, the ANC held a small meeting in Western Native Township which resolved to petition the government for a commission of enquiry into the workings of the Act - a resolution which was, of course, ignored.⁶⁵

The issue of native passes for women did, as we have seen, revive the waning influence of radicals within the ANC and threatened to disrupt the partnership that was developing between some sections of the petty bourgeoisie and the liberal reform movement. The Star feared that popular anger at the pass measures might evolve into a militant campaign and noted with concern that radical leaders were accusing the liberal Joint Council movement in Johannesburg of "playing traitor to the black proletariat."⁶⁶ Thus only some members of the ANC and only the most conservative petty bourgeoisie organizations like the Native Ministers Association, the Native Mine Clerks Association and the Native Teachers Association supported the Joint Council on this occasion - once again indicating the complexity and fluidity of petty bourgeois politics in the city.⁶⁷

Umteteli WaBantu noted that things might have been different for the liberals if consultation with the "respectable" section of the african population had been offered by the state. This class of africans, the paper wrote, would then even have agreed "to the repatriation of the very women and girls of his colour, whose conduct defiles the towns, whose profanity is disgusting and whose prostitution is a national disgrace." The Urban Areas Act, the newspaper believed "furnishe(d) the means to separate the worthy from the unworthy". This was preferred to the pass laws discriminating against all africans in the city.⁶⁸

Ultimately the strength of popular feeling in Johannesburg was not sufficient to weld the political campaigns operating in the city into a cohesive political programme based on the common experiences of different african classes in the city. This lack of a unifying force from below opened the petty bourgeoisie factions up to much internicine dispute, reflected in ICU attitudes to the ANC, and conflicts within these organizations. This further weakened political opposition to the

increasingly effective actions by the state to control the way of life of blacks in the city.

Ultimately this fragmented nature of political organization was determined by the predominant tendency of the petty bourgeoisie leadership in Johannesburg to divorce itself from the "fanatical granite compactness of the 'popular beliefs'"⁶⁹ that were incorporated in slumyard culture and to become more receptive to the coercive forces from above. The attitude of ICU officials to the Kazerne strike in 1927 and the organization's general failure to take advantage of escalation in industrial militancy that began after 1927 is an indication of the organization losing sympathy for and becoming out of touch with the needs of its members.⁷⁰

Although the ICU leadership was aggressively critical of the "good boys" in the ANC, the fact that it also was moving in the same direction - away from the needs of the mass of people struggling to create a tolerable way of life in the city - is revealed when we uncover the reasons for the ICU leadership's opposition to segregation in Johannesburg. According to the ICU newspaper, the Workers Herald, the ICU opposed segregation because:

"There is one thing, however, that the Council has not provided for and that is proper quarters for decent single natives. The Wemmer and Salisbury compounds, are not places where clean living natives could be housed. Just as there are different social classes of Europeans among natives (sic), but the white authorities generally make the mistake of not recognizing this important fact. It is hoped, however, that in removing rough natives from the city, the council will not interfere with decent and law abiding natives who live in presentable quarters. Another factor that should not be overlooked is the fact that rough natives of the Amalaita or liquor selling class should not be mingled with decent and law abiding people in the native townships. The proper way to deal with these scums of iniquity is to blacklist them and send them back to their homes because not only are they a public danger, but they also form a barrier to social and other forms of improvement. It is through their infamous networks that cultured and advanced natives are still tied down with slavery and humiliation in towns like Johannesburg and Pretoria."⁷¹
(my emphasis)

A few editions later Tyanzashe, the ICU Complaints and Research Officer and editor of the Workers Herald, again articulated this attitude toward the housing situation in the slumyards and the peoples way of life that thrived there:

"We venture to suggest that facilities should be granted to natives who have certain qualifications so as to enable the police to weed out the illicit liquor sellers and brewers and have them repatriated

increasingly effective actions by the state to control the way of life of blacks in the city.

Ultimately this fragmented nature of political organization was determined by the predominant tendency of the petty bourgeoisie leadership in Johannesburg to divorce itself from the "fanatical granite compactness of the 'popular beliefs'"⁶⁹ that were incorporated in slumyard culture and to become more receptive to the cooptive forces from above. The attitude of ICU officials to the Maseru strike in 1927 and the organization's general failure to take advantage of the escalation in industrial militancy that began after 1927 is an indication of the organization losing sympathy for and becoming out of touch with the needs of its members.⁷⁰

Although the ICU leadership was aggressively critical of the "good boys" in the ANC, the fact that it also was moving in the same direction - away from the needs of the mass of people struggling to create a tolerable way of life in the city - is revealed when we uncover the reasons for the ICU leaderships opposition to segregation in Johannesburg. According to the ICU newspaper, the Workers Herald, the ICU opposed segregation because:

"There is one thing, however, that the Council has not provided for and that is proper quarters for decent single natives. The Wimmer and Salisbury compounds, are not places where clean living civilized natives could be housed. Just as there are different social classes of Europeans among natives (sic), but the white authorities generally make the mistake of not recognizing this important fact. It is hoped, however, that in removing rough natives from the city, the council will not interfere with decent and law abiding natives who live in presentable quarters. Another factor that should not be overlooked is the fact that rough natives of the Analaita or liquor selling class should not be mingled with decent and law abiding people in the native townships. The proper way to deal with these scums of iniquity is to blacklist them and send them back to their homes because not only are they a public danger, but they also form a barrier to social and other forms of improvement. It is through their infamous networks that cultured and advanced natives are still tied down with slavery and humiliation in towns like Johannesburg and Pretoria."⁷¹
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"We venture to suggest that facilities should be granted to natives who have certain qualifications so as to enable the police to weed out the illicit liquor sellers and brewers and have them repatriated

for good and for all - thus ridding the city of all rowdies and shebeenists."

This he said, would also allow for the elimination of the "nefarious black art" of brewing "skokiaan, sgomfana and skilimikwiki."⁷² Such political statements were not effectively challenged by more militant political positions - in marked contrast to the years before 1920. The newspaper Abantu Batho around which much of the radical populist ideology had developed in the post World War 1 years was in severe difficulties and was only published sporadically.⁷³ Clearly the members of african political leadership who were most able to influence the thinking of the african elite through the more vocal newspapers Umteteli Wa Bantu and Workers Herald displayed a remarkable degree of consensus on their attitude to the culture of the working classes - even though the groupings around these papers were involved in bitter conflict with each other over other issues.

3) Spontaneous Responses to State Action in the Slums

While leadership was busy squabbling amongst themselves and organized politics was becoming more and more remote from the every day struggles of the slum-dwellers, the people of the slumyards were developing their own less formal but more reliable and robust forms of resistance to attempts by the local and central state to destroy their culture.

The very existence of a permanent working class with its own social, cultural, economic and family institutions was testimony to the ability of these people to defy the local state's attempts to create a segregated city. Not surprisingly the working classes who had forged their distinctive means of survival in the slums found a myriad ways, outside of organized campaigns, to resist the various attempts of the state to limit the influx of workers into the city, to control slumyard culture and to dismantle the slums. (See below for details of these actions on the part of various apparatuses of the State.)

In 1927 when the municipality succeeded in proclaiming the slum area of Ferreiras-town, under the Act, 70% of the inhabitants of this area refused to move into municipal accommodation and simply "disappeared and hid themselves in other portions of the city which were not (yet) prohibited to them"⁷⁴ Attempts to remove existing slum areas thus merely led to the creation of slum conditions in new parts of the city. In August 1928 a town councillor complained that attempts to clear the city of its slums had in fact led to the creation of slum conditions in areas to the east and south of the city that were previously all white.⁷⁵ On other occasions people simply ignored proclamations ordering them to move into municipal accommodation. In December, 1929 the large majority of 1500 people affected by one of these proclamations simply failed to move. The council lacked the resources or manpower

to take any further action and left the people to live there.⁷⁶

In fact instead of moving urban blacks into municipal locations the municipality had to acknowledge the reality that every month hundreds of families were moving out of the locations and into the slumyards of the city.⁷⁷ In 1924 the Medical Officer of Health reported that the desired effect of municipal shepherding or drives has not been realized for many of the evicted natives have failed to secure accommodation in municipal locations and barracks and have migrated to other parts of the city.⁷⁸ Throughout the twenties an average of only 12% of the people told to move out of various slum areas by the municipality, went to the locations and hostels, and by 1933, when the Johannesburg Council finally obtained a proclamation of the whole city only 900 out of 30,000 people who had been ordered to move out of the slums under the previous piecemeal proclamations had actually done so.⁷⁹

This massive defensive and non-cooperative response on the part of the urban poor was clearly far more effective in countering the state's attack on the slumyards than any of the organizational activities mentioned above. The solidity of this popular response also aggravated numerous tensions within the apparatuses of the state responsible for urban african affairs. (See below pp. 157-158).

The local state frequently refused to accept responsibility for its failure to control the situation and argued that "much more energetic police action is necessary if the Council's efforts are to be successful."⁸⁰ The South African Police Force - an apparatus of central government - was also over-extended in its attempts to control *marabi* culture. Although police liquor raids amounted to "an incessant relentless war"⁸¹ - in which whole yards were often ploughed up in the search for liquor stored underground and which unearthed thousands of gallons of liquor - the trade survived. In the face of the increasingly sophisticated hiding methods and alarm signals being developed by the slum dwellers, the Chief Inspector of Police for Johannesburg was forced to admit that attempts to enforce prohibition had been a failure.⁸²

Clearly the informal, undirected nature of these covert and defensive responses that occurred every day and night, in the obscure nooks and crannies of the slums, did not require organized coordination. The fact that they were deliberately designed to avoid the scrutiny of the authorities also meant that this kind of resistance remained inaccessible to organized politics. These defensive forms of resistance absorbed much of the pressure being exercised "from below" on the leadership of political organizations, thus leaving the terrain open for the liberal reform movement to initiate an extensive and subtle intervention "from above" into

menting the Stallardist principles of segregation contained in the 1923 Act, the liberal reform movement, which grew up on the Reef after World War I, had considerable room in which to intervene in slumyard culture. In the twenties, a number of liberal institutions proliferated on the Rand, the most important being the Joint Councils, urban mission schools, the Gamma Sigma debating societies, the Wits University Department of 'Bantu Studies', the Bantu Mens Social Centre, the newspaper Umteteli Wa Bantu, The Pathfinders boy scout movement for africa, the Institute of Race Relations and Bantu Sports Club.

Two common themes emerged out of the range of ideas and activities undertaken by this liberal movement in the 1920's. Firstly their activities reflected a concern to create improved health and housing conditions for blacks on the Reef. This coincided with and was supported by some sections of mining and manufacturing who wanted to secure the conditions for a more healthy, efficient and productive labour force. The second major theme of the liberal movement was aimed at winning the allegiance of the "more educated, sophisticated" africans who were seen in the leadership of political opposition at the time.⁸³

As Rich argues the municipal reform movement was explicitly based on an awareness that "political cooptation of african political leadership depended to some extent upon reform in the living conditions in the communities from which they sprang."

During the 20's the liberals increasingly lost their leverage on some level of the state that they had enjoyed briefly before then. (See Chapter 2) The reform movement also lacked the resources actually to provide the housing and social services that their reform initiative required.

Thus as Tim Couzens has shown the most substantial part of liberal energy was restricted to an attempt,

"on the one hand to minimize or disguise the conflictual and coercive aspects of the social formation and on the other to convince educated africans that the grievances

they felt could be ameliorated through reforms which liberals could promulgate."

As the liberals could not directly provide the housing and other services needed most of their activities were taken up by the struggles in the field of culture and entertainment.⁸⁵

The awareness of the need to counter the effects of marabi culture on the consciousness of the "respectable" people of the slums was a response to the obvious lack of appeal of established church activity to these people.

After the split in the American Board Mission in 1917, Frederick Bridgman, the missionary in charge of the Mission's work in Johannesburg, began to realize that conventional missionary activity was not able to compete with the vitality of slumyard culture and its ability to fill the recreational needs of the slumdwellers. In 1917 he complained that while;

"The church is standing still the native is travelling fast! Consequently the native has organized his own pastimes As for the 'new' native you may see his football, cricket and tennis clubs on Sunday from one end of the Reef to the other. Then there are the night concerts where 8 to 10 choirs or glee clubs compete for prizes. These musicals are prone to be not only grotesque but offensive. What a pity that these agencies should not (sic) be utilized for the good. And now the bioscope (movies) are entering the field. Africa is moving while the church apparently clings to the ancient theory of a distinction between the sacred and the secular, while ignoring the body in which the soul lives."

And he went on to urge the establishment of social centres in Johannesburg where concerts, public lectures, games rooms and 'movies' could be offered as an alternative to the recreational activities that slumdwellers were making for themselves.⁸⁶

In the militant atmosphere of 1918 Bridgman also noted that, while it was easy to make converts to christianity in the mining compounds;

"it is far more difficult in Johannesburg to keep our educated young men from abandoning the Faith it makes one stop and think when he realizes that our young radicals in Johannesburg have established the 'African Club' with its own club house there is no use blinking the fact that preaching, prayer meetings and catechism classes taken above are insufficient to satisfy the legitimate demands of our advanced young people."⁸⁷

Already some sections of capital, notably the Chamber of Mines and the Federated Chamber of Industries, were beginning to articulate the need for improved housing for their black workforce - especially the permanently proletarianized section.

Quick to realize the potential support that could be obtained from this quarter, the liberal reform movement began to argue for the beneficial effects of housing and recreational reform on the reproduction of a more efficient, healthy and productive labour force.

In 1918 Bridgman was joined by another ABM missionary, Ray Phillips, who because of his experience of welfare work in the industrializing cities of North America, was well qualified to become the chief proponent of these ideas. He was especially active and articulate in presenting capital's stake in the transformation of working class culture in the city:

"It has become a common place slogan in Western Culture that whoever captures the leisure time of the people gets the people A peoples character is moulded by the kind of investment made of their free time."⁸⁸

Walter Webber a leading industrialist and chairman of the Bantu Men's Social Centre executive committee was even more explicit when he appealed to industry for funds:

"I am not appealing for a charity gift. I am offering you a good business investment. We are apt to think that when the native has finished his work we have no concern in the manner in which he spends his spare time we are deeply concerned with his moral and physical health; and his moral and physical health depends upon the way in which his leisure time is spent."⁸⁹

Later Phillips developed this theme, arguing to enlightened business circles that:

"the white man makes use of the black during the working day. He is a good trusty worker. Only recently has it become plain that what the black man does with his time after working hours is a question of prime importance to every white employer. Shall the Bantu worker be provided with leisure time activities which are wholesome and clean; or shall he find his only recreation and amusement in the disreputable slumyard and drink den?"⁹⁰

And this cry was taken up by the liberal mouthpiece Umteteli Wa Bantu which pro-

slumyard culture played for the families of employed workers. As a result, it appears that the ideas about housing that were being propagated by the official representative bodies of manufacturing capital were not supported by the industry as a whole. (See below Chapter 5). The liberal movement did not have sufficient resources of its own to intervene directly in the provision of housing and other socially necessary services and it seems the liberals were thus forced to confine their activities to the provision of cultural and recreational alternatives to marabi.⁹²

The slums, unlike the municipal locations, were not easily controlled by the state and this allowed for much wider variety of cultural activities to take place. The liberal reform movement concentrated on exploring the use of sporting and recreational activities as a means of detaching the african petty bourgeoisie from the consciousness of the working classes living in the slums.

In 1918 the Helping Hand Club for Native Girls was established by Bridgman and his wife and was aimed at the 'rescue' of african domestic servants from the snares of shebeen life. In the same year Phillips established a debating society in the slums of Doornfontein which he called the Gamma Sigma society. Here leading members of the african petty bourgeoisie, such as R.V. Selope Thema, Selby Msimang and Horatio Bud Mbelle, who were described as "keen witted native leaders at their wits end in Johannesburg, ready to try anything", attended political discussions with white missionaries, lawyers and educationalists.⁹³

In the aftermath of the massive 1921 black mineworkers strike the Chamber of Mines established the conservative liberal newspaper Umteteli Wa Bantu with the object "to voice sound native opinion in the country."⁹⁴ This newspaper was accompanied by moves in the same year to establish the Bantu Mens Social Centre. (BMSC).

The BMSC became one of the key institutions in the liberal network. The Chamber of Mines and the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce gave donations to initiate the centre which began to offer educational activities like bookkeeping, typewriting, english and arithmetic as well as facilities for sports like volleyball, tennis, cricket and boxing and many musical activities aimed at curbing the appeal of marabi music to 'decent' africans. The Gamma Sigma Club also moved to the premises of the BMSC and it was not long before african leaders could be found sipping tea and discussing politics next to a roaring fire in the centre's common room on Sunday afternoons.⁹⁵

However by the end of 1921 these moves toward the cooptation of black political

slumyard culture played for the families of employed workers. As a result, it appears that the ideas about housing that were being propagated by the official representative bodies of manufacturing capital were not supported by the industry as a whole. (See below Chapter 5). The liberal movement did not have sufficient resources of its own to intervene directly in the provision of housing and other socially necessary services and it seems the liberals were thus forced to confine their activities to the provision of cultural and recreational alternatives to marabi.⁹²

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However by the end of 1921 these moves toward the cooptation of black political

leadership were still disjointed and it was this that prompted the formation of the Joint Council movement in 1921. The Joint Council provided the main forum for a more cohesive and sustained drive to put forward the central ideas of liberalism in this period.⁹⁶ As the decade wore on, the conditions of struggle in Johannesburg were such that they "left the scope for 'agitator' politics considerably diminished" and thus allowed liberal activities and institutions to proliferate.⁹⁷

The effect of this wide range of liberal institutions on the consciousness and political outlook of the black petty bourgeoisie needs to much more extensively evaluated. However it is clear that the impact of liberal intervention in slumyard culture was extensive and had a strong influence on the direction in which black political organizations moved in the 1920's.

Brian Willan has argued that the study of the african petty bourgeoisie and the development of this class ideology has been badly neglected by scholars. What follows is a brief attempt to unravel the complex set of values, norms and political attitudes that developed amongst the members of this class as they experienced the conflicting pressures from 'above' and 'below' that stemmed from living in the slums in the 1920's.

An immediate effect of liberal institutions being situated in the slums was the emergence of an ideology amongst the petty bourgeoisie, of mobility and separateness from other classes in the city. This separate identity was often reflected in the clothes that people wore. Ernest Mochumi remembers:

"If you didn't go to the BMSC with a collar and tie they just throw you out. You must wear an evening dress. All in black. To Marabi you just go as you are."⁹⁸

As a result many Marabi musicians of the slumyards, including Mochumi himself did not frequent the BMSC. The centre was seen as a place "for good musicians who did not care about Marabi. To go there you must know how to read music."⁹⁹ The distaste for Marabi culture on the part of the more conservative sections of the petty bourgeoisie was also reflected in the pages of Umteteli Wa Bantu. Umteteli complained regularly about the "Jazz Mania" that was sweeping the slums:

"Our sympathies go out to the thousands of parents who have invested in a musical education for their daughters and sons, only to hear as a result the abominations of jazz"

and after the introduction of an Eistedford for blacks at the BMSC the paper wrote wishfully that "King Jazz is dying! His brothel born noise is now in a stage of hectic decline."¹⁰⁰

Liberal cultural activities were not, however, able completely to destroy the appeal of marabi culture to all members of the petty bourgeoisie. The careers of some of the musicians of the time reflect the attraction that marabi continued to hold for some of the petty bourgeoisie. Jacob Moeketsi, a classically trained pianist who often played recitals at the BMSC, remembers "mixing up freely" with all sorts of people at marabi parties. It was this experience of marabi music that later qualified him to play for the Jazz Maniacs - a band who created a distinctive blend of American jazz and marabi music in the thirties and fourties. Jacob Moeketsi also remembers that Solomon 'Zulu Boy' Cele, the veteran marabi man from Doornfontein, lived with his widowed mother in a respectable cottage in City & Suburban, but due to his father's death "his mother was poor, very poor they were a struggling family and as a result he took to music."¹⁰¹ Clearly the structural instability of the petty bourgeoisie and especially its younger members, was a strong obstacle to the success of the liberals.

However despite this downward pressure of marabi culture, the availability of cultural alternatives provided by the liberals helped spread the belief amongst many of the petty bourgeoisie that political advancement depended on the acquisition of cultural refinement and that "the future history of the African depends largely on his achievements in art, literature and music."¹⁰² Couzens has pointed to the role of graduates from the American Board Mission in formulating this ideology of progress - and separateness from the other classes - in the slums.¹⁰³ The effectiveness of this ideology is indicated by the fact that even the word "marabi" was used as a term of insult or degradation.

Ernest Mochumi remembers that when members of the elite held a dance in the slums they would be careful to avoid calling them marabi parties;

"They used to call it a dance because when you say marabi we think that you are insulting us. It is because sometimes when you quarrel with a man who's not your kind of guy he says to you 'you marabi'. Leave me alone you marabi."¹⁰⁴

Modikwe Dikobe confirms this. He says "marabi" was used as a term of insult because?;

"Those who attended marabi were looked upon as a lower type by older people and even their own friends who considered themselves better."¹⁰⁵

This distance from the working classes on the part of many of the petty bourgeoisie in Johannesburg was also voiced strongly in other ways. Selby Msimang strongly denied in Umteteli Wa Bantu that the "african race" was divided into classes:

"The mere fact that one is showing signs of advancement more than another does not necessarily divide the race into classes, nor does it prove that the progressive

section is ashamed of or detached from the backward sections ... we do not admit that Bantudom is divided into classes."¹⁰⁶

However this was a view that was not shared by many other members of the elite. According to Dikobe those who attended the BMSC "thought of themselves as a separate lot from the rest of the people. It was even worse when they were exempted from the pass laws. It was a divisive of blacks."¹⁰⁷

Umteteli Wa Bantu on other occasions frequently articulated the real class interests of the petty bourgeoisie. For example, after a large May Day Rally was organized in the streets of Johannesburg's slum areas in 1931 by the CPSA, the paper vociferously claimed that;

"the natives who so happily carried the Soviet colours were the vomitings of slum land, members of a debased society They were the flotsam of the streets, the unemployables, the morons who disgrace their colour, do violence to Bantu ethics and slaughter Bantu aspirations."¹⁰⁸

Housing was also a major theme in the ideology that the liberal movement attempted to impose on the petty bourgeoisie. Discussion about the details of the Urban Areas Act was one of the first major areas of investigation undertaken by the Johannesburg Joint Council and a housing subcommittee was also established to investigate housing conditions on the Witwatersrand.¹⁰⁹ A consistent demand by the Joint Council was for improved compounds, bigger family housing in the townships and more security of tenure for better off africans in the townships.¹¹⁰

Umteteli Wa Bantu was again instrumental in spreading this aspect of liberal ideology - arguing explicitly that location housing for the petty bourgeoisie would deradicalize many members of this class:

"It is not the presence of locations as such that aggravate the situation, but the fact that there are no other townships especially designed for the better off and more ambitious classes of natives."¹¹¹

The influence of liberal activity and the growth of this ideology of social, cultural and residential elitism was pervasive and effective in channelling the leadership of political organizations away from mass based activities.

The liberals were always aware of the need to counter the influence of the radical grouping in the leadership of the Transvaal ANC. Phillips boasts that the meetings of the Gamma Sigma Clubs, which began in Doornfontein in 1918, were able to convert a leading member of the radicalized TNC to the liberal cause.¹¹² Selby Msimang

confirms this. He remembers a talk at the club by the advocate O.D. Schreiner that:

"I have never been able to forget. This was the time when we were all developing real hatred for a white person in other words, Black Nationalism. We were already accusing ministers of religion of hypocrisy of holding the bible in one hand while on the other they helped to confiscate the land. Mr. Schreiner disillusioned me completely. I learnt of one that might not visit the wrongs of one person to the whole race to which he belongs." ¹¹³ (sic)

Abantu Batho, the newspaper that provided the focus for radical leadership in the ANC, was also weakened by less open methods on the part of the liberals. In 1920 the resources of the Chamber of Mines were used to entice the printing workers of Abantu Batho to work for Unteteli Wa Bantu at higher wages. This effectively hastened the decline of Abantu Batho after 1920. ¹¹⁴

At the time of the campaign against women's passes in Johannesburg, Phillips was again hopeful that the BMSC and its activities would be a useful arena to gain the confidence of the "hard boiled Congress group." ¹¹⁵ On this occasion the liberals failed to pull the whole ANC leadership into its campaign but in the long run the Transvaal branch became solidly imbued with liberal ideas of trying to influence white public opinion through the example set by a 'civilized' black elite. ¹¹⁶

The extent of liberal influence over the leadership of the ICU is more ambiguous. In the early twenties A.W.G. Champion had been a member of the Johannesburg Joint Council and the Bantu Men's Social Centre. At this time people like Selby Msimang and Alexander Jabavu were simultaneously members of these institutions and ICU officials. ¹¹⁷ However as the organization became more radical in the latter half of the decade, the younger and more militant leadership of the petty bourgeoisie shifted to a strongly critical stance against what they saw as crude attempts by the liberals to coopt them through institutions like the 'Bantu Mens Slaughter Centre'. ¹¹⁸ Ray Phillips' divisive approach was reflected in a letter he wrote to Tyamzashe, editor of the ICU newspaper, where he said:

"you are a fairly well educated man your brain has been sharpened beyond that of many of your race. Drop around to the Social Centre some time and give us a chance of getting acquainted. We need men like you to get under the job with us and lift." ¹¹⁹

Not surprisingly the crudity of this letter was responded to with a similarly crude rejection.

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ICU. However even at this stage, there were signs that this hostility to liberalism did not prevent ICU leaders from articulating sentiments about location housing and urban segregation, which were as elitist if not more so than those circulating in liberal circles.

It was not long before attention from white liberals focused on the possibility of exploiting divisions within the ICU. This came from outside the mainstream of the white liberal circles, and was articulated by the three female writers, Winifred Holtby, Ethelreda Lewis and Mabel Palmer. These three began pointing to the limitations of the Joint Council's, and BMSC's concentration on the petty bourgeoisie's leisure time.

Ethelreda Lewis wrote of the mainstream liberals:

"They fail to see that where help and a faithful presence is most vitally needed is not in the nursery but in the street of those with no reputation, natives who are constantly being walked over by the well organized communists here."¹²⁰ (My emphasis)

Kadalié's decision to expel the communists from the ICU was motivated by a complex set of factors. Roux suggests that one reason was Kadalié's acceptance of liberal arguments that the ICU would be able to gain government and international recognition if it rid itself of its radical image.¹²¹

Liberal intervention in ICU affairs up to the split with the CPSA was fairly spasmodic. After the break and after Kadalié's trip to Europe - where he made contact with the British Labour Movement - it steadily increased. It was Kadalié's European trip which led to the appointment of Ballinger as advisor to the ICU and Ballinger rapidly consolidated links between the ICU and the liberal establishment. Ballinger's appointment further exacerbated existing tensions within the ICU and contributed to its fragmentation in 1923. Kadalié in fact claimed that he resigned from the ICU because the affairs of the organization were "being relegated to a coterie of Europeans and Natives who assembled in the Bantu Men's Social Centre."¹²² Even if this claim was exaggerated the fact that Kadalié could appeal to this demonstrates the significance of liberal interference in the ICU at the time.

Liberal ideology was therefore able to exercise much influence on the eventual direction of ICU policy and the receptivity of the organization's leadership to this influence was obviously linked to the urban petty bourgeoisie's detachment from the culture of the working classes in the city.

Liberal concern to counter communist influence over the african petty bourgeoisie was however the mainspring of the liberal movement. This motive infused most of their activities. We have seen how Umteteli Wa Bantu expressed the fear that slum conditions provided the breeding ground for 'Black Reds' and 'Native Bolsheviks' and much of the liberal concern for urban segregation and differentiated location housing stemmed from this (probably misplaced) fear. Eddie Roux recorded the obstacles that liberal cultural and sporting activities placed on the CPSA's ability to recruit members of the petty bourgeoisie into the CPSA's ranks. These activities, he said, "help them to forget their troubles. It makes it very difficult organizing them for a serious effort to oppose their oppressors. Sports and games absorb a lot of the thinking of the people."¹²³ Ray Phillips also claimed in 1930 that due to the work of the Joint Councils, "the communists and other extremist organizations have not a larger hold than they have on the native people on the Reef."¹²⁴

At this time a debate raged within the Communist Party over the political potential of the black petty bourgeoisie with Moses Kotane, Eddie Roux and Edwin Mofutsanya arguing, against Lazar Bach and Douglas Wolton, that the petty bourgeoisie lacked any roots in effective commercial and entrepreneurial channels and therefore formed a potential class ally.¹²⁵ While the CPSA was debating this the liberal reform movement and its network of institutions was active in pulling petty bourgeois 'leisure time' and ideological discourse away from the attractions of working class culture - and their success was due, in part, to the defensive nature of slumyard culture which failed to exercise a strong alternative from below, to the political pressure applied from above to the petty bourgeoisie.

5) Political Organization in Municipal Locations - A Brief Comparison

The nature of Johannesburg's slumyards allowed these deradicalizing influences much room in which to operate. The range of contradictions that underlay the "slum problem" defied effective state control over the daily lives of people in the slums. Castells claims that it is state intervention in urban contradictions that exposes the class nature of the forces shaping the urban environment and provides a focus for populist struggles against these forces. In his words "this intervention is not a simple regulating mechanism. The action of the state is the result of a political process which is largely determined by class struggle." and it also generates further political struggles because it "in fact politicizes and globalizes urban conflicts by articulating directly the material conditions of daily life and the class content of state policies."¹²⁶ Although Castells underrates the extent to which state intervention in the urban environment can effectively divide the popular classes and undermine political opposition, this perspective does point to the

absence of a strong and consistent state presence in the slum areas of Johannesburg around which political organizations could mobilize mass support.

In the municipal locations near Johannesburg and other Reef towns the situation was different. These areas were designed so that the local town councils could impose a fine mesh of controls on the daily lives of their inhabitants. State intervention in these locations took the form of "stand permits, residential passes, visitors passes, seeking work passes, employment registration certificates, permits to reside on employers premises, work-on-own-behalf certificates, domestic service books, washer womens permits and entertainment permits."¹²⁷

It has already been shown how the imposition of night passes on women in Johannesburg threatened to prohibit the ability of women living in the slums to participate in marabi culture and how as a result the issue of night passes for women sparked off a brief flicker of popular political resistance. It is not surprising, therefore, that the more extensive web of state controls on informal economic and cultural activities in the locations elicited a much more combative response from the poorer classes living in these locations.

Municipal locations, especially those that were small and in the rural areas, were also often the first stop for families recently driven off the land by anti squatting measures and these people were inevitably still angry and bitter about their experiences.¹²⁸ Such locations also did not provide opportunities for the growth of a large petty bourgeoisie. Openings for mine clerks and teachers were not as extensive as in Johannesburg and opportunities for self employment such as trading, banking and artisanal work were strictly controlled by the state.¹²⁹ The conditions for the ambiguous and divided class responses that existed in the slumyards were not present in the locations. Consequently the attention of the liberals was not drawn to these locations and their cooptive tactics were either absent or ineffective in them.¹³⁰

It is partly for these reasons that the residents of municipal locations were more willing to undertake organized campaigns of resistance to the state's control over their daily lives. This partly accounts for the rural nature of ICU militancy and the CPSEA's successes at organizing in small semi rural locations in the late twenties. A few examples of this rural militancy around the issues of day to day survival must suffice.

Potchefstroom was a location whose inhabitants joined the CPSEA en masse in the 1920's. Here the location inhabitants saw municipal controls over "dances, parties

ted by the CPSA.

In one incident a group of policemen unfortunate enough to stage a beer raid during a CPSA meeting were chased by an enraged crowd through the township and forced to take refuge in the location superintendant's office.¹³³

A similar incident happened in Ladysmith in Natal, where 150 women armed with sticks attacked a force of policemen outside the local jail and demanded the release of their "sisters" who were arrested for brewing beer. The police sustained many injuries in the half-hour fight that ensued before they were able to control the situation.¹³⁴

The mass struggles in Durban in 1929 and 1930, which culminated in the assassination of the CPSA organizer, Johannes Nkosi, were also directly related to militant popular responses to state controls over beer brewing. The Durban municipality was the only city in South Africa at the time with a self supporting "native revenue account" and this was due to its implementation of a municipal monopoly of the beer trade, under the terms of the Urban Areas Act.¹³⁵

The Anti Kaffir Beer Manufacturing League, which coordinated a massive boycott of the municipal beer halls displayed a clear understanding of the role of the municipal monopoly in the local political economy:

".... Natives must be told that they must part company with kaffir beer because their funds have become exhausted through buying beer not knowing what benefit they derive except to build compounds and barracks which are full of bad laws and disagreeable control."¹³⁶

These struggles against controls imposed by the state on the informal beer trade were in marked contrast to the more defensive responses that took place in the slums of Johannesburg and they were therefore more open to political direction and

coordination.

The CPSA was successful in recruiting members in places like Bloemfontein, Kroonstad and Vereeniging for similar reasons.

Here, in the country districts, the CPSA experienced a "mushroom like growth" and in Vereeniging, Gana Makabeni had considerable success with a CPSA night school that he opened there.¹³⁷

In the Bloemfontein location the CPSA newspaper made record sales and the Bloemfontein Friend noted with anxiety that:

"Communism has gained a firm hold on hundreds of natives in the Bloemfontein location during the year, and there is every reason to believe that the movement is spreading particularly among the younger natives. Individual leaders in the location have spared neither time nor energy in propagating and cultivating their political creed amongst the natives."¹³⁸

It was these kinds of successes that led Eddie Roux to point out that:

"in the Transvaal while the ranks of the CPSA were swelled by hundreds of native recruits, chiefly from the smaller semi-rural locations' few adherents were gained from among the Bantu intellectuals."¹³⁹

The factors that made this kind of political organization possible for the CPSA also partly accounts for the rural nature of ICU militancy.

In Middelburg one ICU meeting gave the impression "that a strong cavalry corps or commando had off saddled" as ex labour tenants from surrounding towns "flocked to that location in their thousands on horseback and in commando formation."¹⁴⁰

Much ICU activity in these areas was aimed at mass mobilization against the aspects of municipal control over the daily lives of location dwellers. In Rouxville, an ICU organizer urged young women, who earned a living by doing casual washing and then paid a tax on this to the town council, to join the union.¹⁴¹

In Kroonstad the ICU also gained a mass following as the town council evicted people from their homes and sold their houses for being in arrears with their rates.¹⁴²

The contrast between the ICU's connection with popular issues in these small rural locations and its divorce from the issues affecting Johannesburg's slumdwellers explains the following statement made at the ICU's Annual Conference in 1928, by John Mancoo, a member of the Wynberg branch, where he complained that ICU officials:

"wasted time in big towns - eating puddings and the

like - instead of going to the rural areas and organize (sic) the real workers of the country."¹⁴³

5) The Depression and Popular Struggles in Johannesburg

A number of writers have argued that the Depression had a strong radicalizing effect on the political mood of the black and white working classes. Unemployment, wage cuts and a speed up in the production process evoked considerable militancy from both unemployed and employed workers. The years 1931 and 1932 saw the greatest number of strikes since 1922 with 6,284 and 4,011 workers involved respectively. A notable characteristic of these strikes was a display of a significant degree of non-racial working class solidarity and a withdrawal of political support for the state by the sections of the white working class.¹⁴⁴ This was to have important implications for the nature of state intervention into the residential conditions of white workers in Johannesburg after the Depression (See Below Chapter 5 pp. 171-200).

O'Meara argues that the Depression had a dramatic and harsh, though uneven effect, on the producing classes. He points out that, although the Depression did not affect South African industry as severely as other countries, local industry, commercial capital and especially white agriculture were hard hit. Between 1930 and 1932 turnover in private manufacture fell by 20% and the commercial sector's contribution to the national income fell from £36,7 million to £25,8 million. In 1932 the value of South African goods was 38% of their 1928 value and a severe crisis in the agricultural sector led to a massive exodus of poor whites from the countryside.¹⁴⁵ At the same time african agriculture was suffering from a severe drought and the Native Economic Commission warned of starvation and the creation of "desert areas" in the reserves. "Declining crop yields, overpopulation and lean herds" it said "were driving peasants to the towns."¹⁴⁶

The result of these developments was massive unemployment, severe aggravation of housing shortages, congestion and slum conditions in the towns. By 1933 22% of all white and coloured males were officially listed as unemployed and one-sixth of all whites were described as "so poor they cannot adequately feed or house their children."¹⁴⁷ The non-racial character of the slums was also accentuated. One irate home owner noted the kind of congestion that was taking place in a letter to the Star:

"Some years ago the natives were cleared from Doornfontein but already their numbers have more than trebled There is always a large number of natives walking about the streets workless, some of them a menace to law abiding citizens ... Clear out natives from the vicinity of white people so that property will not lose its value as is the case today in Doornfontein."¹⁴⁸

No figures are available to tell the effects of the Depression on the subsistence levels of the black working classes. However it is safe to assume that the effects were even more harsh and dramatic than for whites. Unemployment for black workers was exacerbated by the Pact government's civilized labour policy, all sectors of the economy, except mining showed a drastic fall in the ratio of black to white workers employed.¹⁴⁹

A more stark illustration of the effects of the Depression on the urban poor was the discovery by the police that a man, picked up in Johannesburg for lying "drunk" on the pavement, had in fact collapsed from starvation. In 1933 the Depression even forced the Department of Native Affairs to uncharacteristically allocate £15,000 to the "relief of native distress."¹⁵⁰

Ezekiel Mphahlele claims that the collective culture of the towns was able to contain the impact of the Depression, "for all that it mattered the Depression of the early thirties did not seem on the surface to add an ounce of pressure more to the poverty of the black man."¹⁵¹ Ray Phillips in 1934 also claimed that "the communal system of self-help, traditional among the Bantu peoples" meant that "those out of work have been taken care of by those who had work" - although he noticed that in the previous two years "the level of the workers has sagged and the whole population is near the starvation point."¹⁵²

Clearly under the strain of unemployment, a crisis in the rural economy, massive proletarianization and concomitant housing shortages the delicate balance of resources that gave the defensive culture of the slumyards its resilience was disrupted and gave way to a series of more aggressive and militant responses on the part of the poor in Johannesburg.

Very surprisingly political organization followed the direction of this spontaneous militancy. The increased pace of proletarianization and the growth of some types of manufacturing industry in the late twenties meant that work place organization became one of the most significant forms of working class struggle just before the depression. From 1920 strikes escalated dramatically and for the first time the number of black strikers exceeded that of whites. The CPISA responded to this new tide of worker militancy by organizing a number of industrial unions, as an alternative to the declining ICU. These industrial unions joined together in 1928 to form the Federation of Non-European Trade Unions (FNETU) which had 10,000 members on the Rand, in the clothing, mattress, furniture, meat, dairy, canvas, transport and engineering industries.¹⁵³

In November, 1929 a mass meeting at the ICU Workers Hall held under the joint auspices of the CPSA, the ICU, the Independent ICU and the South African Federation of Non-European Trade Unions attracted a lot of support and the mood was so angry that an effigy of Oswald Pirow, the Minister of Justice, was burnt.¹⁵⁴

Even Kadalie was motivated to make a comeback as the populist hero of old. On Dingaans Day 1929 he led a jazz band with "its members in fancy dress and with painted faces", playing the Red Flag, at the head of a 4000 strong demonstration through the streets of the City & Suburban and Doornfontein slums. During the demonstration:

"Crowds of dirty urchins crowded out of the backyards and ran after the band screaming and whistling. It seemed as if every tumbledown wood and iron shanty was inhabited by a tribe and the streets were thronged by a crowd of every colour and nationality when the demonstration approached End Street a large number of natives who are usually to be seen loitering in the neighbourhood, joined the procession out of sheer curiosity."¹⁵⁵

In 1931 the introduction of new curfew regulations and the eventual implementation of night passes for women meant that "the locations throughout the Reef were seething with unrest and a series of mass protest meetings and demonstrations was arranged on a national scale."¹⁵⁶

On May Day in 1931 2 000 black and 1 000 white workers took to the streets and marched on the Carlton Hotel shouting "we want bread" and "work or wages". They then moved to the other symbol of wealth in Johannesburg, the Rand Club, where a huge clash with the police took place.¹⁵⁷ The CPSA also established an Unemployment Union and began to demand the establishment of Non-Contributory Unemployment Insurance Fund.¹⁵⁸ In 1933 the "Unemployed Council" organized an expedition of workers to enter shops in President Street and to demand funds for the unemployed. This led to a huge fight with the police and numerous injuries on both sides before order was restored.¹⁵⁹ In September of this year 2 000 workers of all races again staged a mass demonstration of the unemployed.¹⁶⁰

Ironically political organizations were unable permanently to revitalize themselves on the crest of this wave of popular militancy during the Depression. Deprived of funds and racked by internal conflict and expulsions the CPSA emerged from the Depression with a membership of 150 people.¹⁶¹ By 1932 the exhaustion of unemployment funds and the fact that the CPSA's unemployment campaigns lacked a strong organizational base meant that A. J. was left with only two unions.¹⁶² Despite the brief revival of ICU militancy, a lack of finances caused the ICU office in

Johannesburg to finally close in 1930.

However the effects of these struggles on the policies of the state were much more dramatic and significant. One of the major concerns of the state was the non-racial character of the struggles. In the midst of the non-racial militancy displayed by Johannesburg's working classes Tielman Roos called for the creation of a coalition government for the purpose of "saving the country from communism."¹⁶³ In 1933

Smuts supported the idea of a coalition in a speech where he said:

"The workers (white) may rest assured that not only are we doing our best to keep their representation in parliament but they may be assured that we shall continue to watch over their welfare and we shall look after the interests of the (white) workers of this country to the very best of our ability."¹⁶⁴

And Jon Lewis argues that the formation of the Fusion government which followed the Depression was motivated by a desire to "regain the electoral/political support of white workers thus preventing any possible alliance with the emerging black proletariat."¹⁶⁵

Part of this new drive to regain the allegiance of the white working class involved a much more extensive intervention by the State into the slums of the city - the breeding ground of non-racial working class unity.

This theme - the nature of ruling class responses to the "slum problem" in Johannesburg - forms the subject of the next chapter.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. See chapter two.
2. See chapter six.
3. See chapter two, pp. 76-77.
4. P. Bonner, '1920 Mineworkers Strike', p. 289.
5. P. Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa, University of California Press, 1971, p. 83 and p. 189.
6. D. O'Meara, 'Class and Nationalism in African Resistance. Secondary Industrialization and the Development of a Mass Movement in South Africa', 1930 - 1950, M.A. Thesis, Sussex University, 1973, pp. 45 - 47;
Walshe, African Nationalism, p. 128.
7. P.L. Wickens, The Industrial and Commercial Workers Union of Africa, Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 117.
8. Hirson, 'Land, Labour and the "Black Republic"', unpublished mimeo, undated, pp. 6 - 7.
9. Wickens, The ICU, p. 118.
10. Wickens, The ICU, p. 117.
11. Wickens, The ICU, p. 150.
12. Simons and Simons, Class and Colour, p. 356 and 354;
P. Bonner, 'The Decline and Fall of the ICU - A case of Self Destruction?', South African Labour Bulletin, Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 41.
13. See Simons and Simons, Class and Colour, p. 356;
Bonner, 'Decline and Fall of the ICU'.
14. O'Meara, 'Class Nationalism', p. 25;
Star, 8/2/1930.

15. Hirson, 'Black Republic', pp. 1 - 20.
16. E. Roux, Time Longer than Rope, University of Wisconsin Press, 1974, pp. 201 - 202.
17. Roux, Time Longer than Rope, pp. 206 - 212.
18. Hirson, 'Black Republic', p. 20.
19. O'Meara, 'Class and Nationalism', p. 26.
20. The ANC, for example is said to have been, 'a loose coterie of chiefs, lawyers, clergymen and other educated persons' who were concerned throughout the 1920's to consolidate and extend, by constitutional means, the relative privileges of its members rather than with the mobilization of the masses. The neglect of urban workers and the 'contradictory bourgeois aims' of the ICU are also said to be the result of the 'elite or bourgeois background' of the leadership.
O'Meara, 'Class and Nationalism', pp. 45 - 57;
Bonner, 'Decline and Fall of the ICU', p. 21.
21. The leadership of the ANC is often seen as being totally coopted by liberal bodies like the Joint Councils, Gamma Sigma Club and Bantu Men's Social Centre in the 1920's - what were known at the time as the social milieu of the 'good boys' on the Rand. The ICU's eclectic combination of mass organization with the 'tactics of constitutional suasion' and the expulsion of communists from its ranks in 1926 is often partially ascribed^{to} the fact that 'to an ever increasing extent, they were also affected by the projects of white liberals.' The CPSA also said to have experienced severe difficulties in recruiting members of the african petty bourgeois because of the competing liberal influences. See H. Bradford, 'Organic Intellectuals or Petty Bourgeois Opportunists: The Social Nature of ICU Leadership in the Countryside', unpublished Postgraduate Seminar Paper, History Department, University of the Witwatersrand, May 1983, p. 9;
Roux, Time Longer Than Rope, p. 162.
22. Bonner, 'Decline and Fall of the ICU', p. 42.
23. O'Meara, 'Class and Nationalism', chapter five;
O'Meara, '1946 Mineworkers Strike', p. 167.

24. See chapter 1, pp. 18-24
25. Proctor, 'Class Struggle', pp. 80 - 81.
26. Stedman Jones, 'Working Class Culture', p. 490.
27. CAD, SAP Papers, File Conf. 6/953/23, ~~ED~~ Officer Johannesburg Division to Deputy Commissioner, SAP Witwatersrand Division 31/10/1923.
28. Modikwe Dikobe, 'Notes',
NAD, American Board Mission, Box A3/42, Annual Report, 1918.
29. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 29/9/23.
30. Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism', p. 179 - 181;
NAD, American Board Mission, Box 12, Cutting from Newspaper entitled
Udwibe Lase Natal, no date.
31. Hirson, 'Black Republic', pp. 6 - 7.
32. Bradford, 'Organic Intellectuals', p. 20.
33. Aler, 'Class Struggles in Doornfontein; A History of the Johannesburg Jewish
Workers Club 1925 to 1950', unpublished mimeo, no date, p. 17.
34. Roux, Time Longer than Rope, pp. 202 - 205.
35. Bonner, 'Transvaal Native Congress', p. 285.
36. Bradford, 'Organic Intellectuals', pp. 20 - 21.
37. Phillips, Bantu are Coming, p. 126.
38. Interview, Jacob Moe'tetsi, 26/6/1980.
39. Bonner, 'Transvaal Native Congress', p. 18.
40. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 7/6/23, 3/2/23 and 2/11/23.
41. Bonner, 'Transvaal Native Congress', pp. 42 - 43.

42. Bonner, 'Transvaal Native Congress', p. 272.
43. Bonner, 'Transvaal Native Congress', p. 272.
44. H. Bradford, 'Leadership, Ideology and Organization',
Unpublished mimeo, undated, p. 14.
45. Bradford, 'Leadership, ideology and organization', pp. 19 - 21.
46. NAD, American Board Mission, Box 12, The Truth About the ICU, pamphlet, undated.
47. Star, 28/10/1927.
48. Umteteli Wa Bantu, (Editorial) 3/8/28 and Star 3/8/28.
49. Star, 5/3/27.
50. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 12/3/1927.
51. Umteteli Wa Bantu 5/3/27; Star 5/3/27-
Star (Editorial) 3/8/28.
52. Star 29/6/28; Star (Editorial) 3/8/28.
53. Star 7/7/27; 8/7/27; Workers Herald 15/7/27.
54. Star 8/11/28; 27/11/28.
55. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 14/12/29.
56. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 10/1/25; 3/1/25.
57. Star 2/6/25.
58. P. Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism' p. 190; Umteteli Wa Bantu 11/7/31.
59. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 6/6/25.
60. Walsh, African Nationalism pp. 81 - 83; P. Rich 'Dilemmas of Liberalism'
chapter 6.

61. Walshe, African Nationalism, p. 104.
62. R. Davenport, 'Beginnings of Urban Segregation in South Africa'; Rich, Dilemmas of Liberalism, p. 187.
63. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 19/5/23.
64. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 7/6/23.
65. Star, 15/3/27; Umteteli Wa Bantu 19/3/27.
66. Star, 2/6/25.
67. Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism', p. 190.
68. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 3/1/25.
69. A. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 9.
70. A point made by Wickens, The ICU, pp. 145 - 147.
71. Workers Herald, 15/1/26.
72. Workers Herald, 15/11/26.
73. Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism', p. 180.
74. Star, 21/1/29.
75. Star, 3/8/28.
76. Star, 20/12/29.
77. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 27/7/29.
78. JCL, Medical Officer of Health, Annual Report, 1922 - 1924, p. 56.
79. Proctor, 'Class Struggles', p. 64;
JCL, Medical Officer of Health, Annual Report 1936 - 1937 p. 45.

80. JCL, Medical Officer of Health, Annual Report, 1922 - 1924, p. 56.
81. CAD, SAP Papers, Deputy Commissioner SAP, Witwatersrand to Commissioner of Police, 20 March, 1934.
82. SAIRR, Commission or Inquiry into Illicit Liquor, p. 29.
83. Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism', p. 193.
84. See Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism', p. 176.
85. T. Couzens, 'Moralizing Leisure Time, The Trans Atlantic Connection and Black Johannesburg: 1918 to 1936', in Marks and Rathbone, Industrialization and Social Change, p. 314.
86. NAD, American Board Mission, Box A3/42, Annual Report, 1917.
87. NAD, American Board Mission, Box A3/42, Annual Report 1918.
88. Phillips, Bantu in the City, p. 292.
89. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 26/1/24.
90. CPSA, Phillips Papers 1930 - 1939, AL444 (File 2) 'The Rising Tide of Native Crime'. Address by R.E. Phillips to the Rotary Club of Johannesburg 7/5/1940.
91. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 28/8/26;
92. Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism', p. 174.
93. Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism', p. 178.
94. Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism', p. 179.
95. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 11/6/27.
96. The main objectives of the Joint Council were put forward at one of its first meetings in Johannesburg.

"the council could also do useful work by assisting natives in the preparation of evidence they intend giving before commissions and seeing that the correct information reached the public through

the press."

CPSA, Pim Papers, File Fa 9/1, Minutes of the Second Meeting of Europeans and Natives to consider the formation of a Joint Council on Matters Affecting the Native People. Wednesday 19/5/1921.

97. Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism', p. 185.
98. Interview, E. Mochumi, 27/10/1980.
99. Interview, E. Mochumi, 27/10/1980.
100. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 11/2/33.
101. Interview, Jacob Mosketsi, 26/6/80.
102. Bantu World, 25/11/1933.
103. T. Couzens, '"The New African", Herbert Dhlomo and Black South African Literature in English 1851 - 1956, PH D Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1980, p. 305.
104. Interview, Ernest Mochumi, 27/10/1980.
105. Interview, Modikwe Dikobe, 16/10/1980.
106. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 19/9/1925.
107. Interview, Modikwe Dikobe, 16/10/1980.
108. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 9/5/31.
109. Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism', pp. 186 - 187.
110. See Umteteli Wa Bantu, 29/9/23.
111. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 2/5/1931.
112. R. Phillips, Bantu in City, p. 121.
113. Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism', p. 179 - from S. Msimang, Autobiography,

SOAS. p. 108.

114. Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism', p. 180.
115. NAD, American Board Mission, Box 31, R. Phillips to D. Taylor 22/12/24.
116. O'Meara, 'Class and Nationalism', p. 51.
117. Bradford, 'Organic Intellectuals', pp. 9 - 10.
118. Workers Herald, 15/1/26.
119. Workers Herald, 26/2/26.
120. Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism', p. 215.
121. Roux, Time Longer than Rope, p. 162.
122. Roux, Time Longer than Rope, p. 186.
123. R. Phillips, Bantu in City, chapter 7, pg. 311.
124. NAD, American Board Mission, Box A/3/44, R. Phillips, Report for Johannesburg 1930 - 1931.
125. Simons and Simons, Class and Colour, p. 490.
126. Castells, City, Class, Power, p. 170.
127. Bradford, 'Leadership, Ideology and Organization', p. 20.
128. J. Wells, 'The Day the Town Stood Still, Womens Resistance in Potchefstroom 1912 - 1930', History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand, p. 1.
129. Bradford, 'Organic Intellectuals', pp. 17 - 8.
130. Wells, 'Women's Resistance', p. 41.
131. Wells, 'Women's Resistance', p. 41.

132. Wells, 'Women's Resistance', p. 21.
133. Star, 10/7/28.
134. Star, 18/9/29.
135. P. La Hausse, 'Drinking in a Cage: The Durban System and the 1929 Riots', Africa Perspective. No. 10, 1982.
136. La Hausse, 'Drinking in a Cage', p. 70.
137. Simons and Simons, Race and Class, pp. 339 - 400.
138. Roux, Time Longer than Rope, p. 245.
139. Roux, Time Longer than Rope, p. 214.
140. Workers Herald, 18/2/28.
141. CAD, SNA Papers, NT 4408 352/313 'Native Organizations', Notes by Constable Ben Letsina, SAP Rouxville.
142. Star, 7/7/27.
143. Wickens, The ICU, p. 156.
144. J. Lewis, 'The Garmiston Bye Election of 1932: The State and the White Working Class During the Depression', African Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand, March 1978, p. 10 and p. 13.
145. O'Meara, 'Class, Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaaner Nationalism 1934 - 1948, PH D Thesis, SOAS, 1979, pp. 3-7.
146. Simons and Simons, Race and Class, p. 433.
147. Carnegie Corporation Commission, The Poor White Problem in South Africa, Part I, pp. vi - vii and Part III pp. 217 - 222.
148. Star, 25/8/27.

149. O'Meara, 'Class, Capital, Ideology', pp. 3 - 7.
150. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 26/8/33.
151. Mpahlele, Down Second Avenue, p. 88.
152. CPSA, Phillips Papers 1930 - 1939, File A1444, Newspaper Cutting, Article by R.E. Phillips, 'Activities in Johannesburg', Missionary Herald, no date.
153. J. Bolitho, 'The South African Wage Board 1925 - 1945', Honours Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1978;
Roux, Time Longer than Rope, p. 209.
154. Star, 16/11/29; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 16/11/1929.
155. Rand Daily Mail, 17/12/1929.
156. South African Worker, 12/6/1931.
157. Simons and Simons, Race and Class, p. 445;
South African Worker, 29/5/1931.
158. South African Worker, 29/5/1931.
159. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 22/4/1933.
160. Roux; Time Longer than Rope, p. 272.
161. Roux, Time Longer than Rope, p. 269.
162. Simons and Simons, Race and Class, p. 156 and p. 444.
163. Lewis, 'Germiston Bye Election', p. 11.
164. Lewis, 'Germiston Bye Election', p. 12.
165. Lewis, 'Germiston Bye Election', pp. 11 - 12.

CHAPTER 5STATE RESPONSES TO MARABI CULTURE - ATTEMPTS AT URBAN SEGREGATION IN THE 1920's AND 1930's

With the passing of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act in 1923 the state made its first attempt to formulate a coherent policy for the control and management of the black working classes in South African towns. The main provisions of the Act gave local state authorities the duty to establish segregated locations or hostels in the towns, to set up a separate "Native Revenue" account for financing and the building and administration of these townships, ^{and} to monopolize the production and sale of "kaffir beer" - the proceeds of which would go to the "Native Revenue" account. The Act also prohibited freehold ownership of property by africans in the urban areas and trading rights and opportunities for africans were also limited.¹

The Act was clearly designed to remove responsibility for the provision of housing for urban blacks from both capital and the central state - and to allocate this responsibility to the local state authorities. At the same time it attempted to relieve the local state as far as possible of the financial burden that this responsibility imposed on the general rates of the towns and to ensure that the black working classes paid for their own housing and other items necessary for their survival and reproduction - through rents, fines and beer hall profits that would be paid into the "Native Revenue Account."

In its final form the legislation was a victory for those classes that had supported the Stallardist principle that "natives - men, women and children - should only be permitted within the municipal areas in so far as their presence is demanded by the wants of the white population."² These classes in Johannesburg - the white shopkeepers, small traders and property owners and the relatively privileged white wage earners - had campaigned for strict segregation, influx control, the abolition of property rights for blacks and the prevention of municipal rates being used for the provision of social commodities to the black working class. To some extent the Act met these demands.

However the Act did make some concessions to the liberal reform movement and black petty bourgeoisie - groups that had campaigned for legislation that would have included freehold property rights for privileged africans and would have involved a far less repressive form of urban segregation. Protection was provided in the Act for africans who already owned property in town, the central state retained control over influx control and revenue from the pass regulations and crucially the local

state was obliged to provide alternative housing before black communities could be evicted from the slums in town.³

This legislation emerged out of a period of considerable tension and debate within the ruling classes of the country over the form and direction of "urban native policy". This process of decision making was, in turn, a direct response to the urban questions that had been raised by a crisis in the reproduction of labour force on the Witwatersrand and a massive increase in popular militancy in South African towns in the years after World War One.

However the mere fact of legislation being placed on the statute books did not guarantee that the state's new found "urban native policy" would automatically be implemented. Despite this legal attempt to cope with the questions of control, public housing, public health and the financing of these state activities, the machinery and resources of the local state did not keep pace with the growth of a black urban working class that accompanied the growing industrialization of the country and the underdevelopment of the african reserves in the 1920's. This was especially true of Johannesburg, but was a widespread national phenomenon as well.

As was argued in Chapter 4, the first attempts by the local state to put into practice some of the powers conferred on it, and to clear Johannesburg of it's worst slums, were a dismal failure. The Urban Areas Act came into force in January 1924. The town council instructed the Town Clerk, the Medical Officer of Health and the Superintendent of Locations to liaise with the government's Department of Native Affairs, so that the segregatory provisions of the Act could be put promptly into force.⁴ These officials examined the slum position in Johannesburg and decided that New Doornfontein and Malay locations - the most congested areas in the town - would be the first areas to be segregated under the new act.

In December, 1924 a proclamation applying the segregatory provisions of the Act to the whole of the Johannesburg Municipal Area was issued by the government, at the request of the town council.⁵ The government, however, had reservations about issuing this proclamation from the start. The main concern of the government's Department of Native Affairs was that the council was not allowing blacks to build their own houses in the Western and Eastern Native Townships. As a result, "no building scheme likely to be undertaken by your council will come within measurable distance of meeting demands in this respect for several years to come", wrote the Secretary of Native Affairs to the council in September, 1924. He also agreed to recommend the Johannesburg area for proclamation, under the 1923 Act, only on condition that it would be applied gradually, area by area, as alternative accommoda-

tion became available.⁶

Despite this setback the Johannesburg town council was determined to carry on with its programme of slum clearance. It took a census of the Doornfontein area and in January, 1925 issued ~~passes~~ passes to 12,000 non-exempted blacks in the area requiring them to move to municipal accommodation within a month. The pass numbers of these people were taken so that those who failed to obey the instruction could be prosecuted when "run to earth". In March that year parts of the Malay location which had been condemned for 25 years as the worst slum in town and which had been the subject of virulent campaigns by the ratepayers of adjacent areas in the early 20's, were removed by the local state. These "shepherdings" or slum clearance "drives" continued throughout 1925 and the early part of 1926 - resulting, as we have seen, in a brief radicalization of black politics in Johannesburg.

However, these local state attempts were unsuccessful because of the ability of other slum areas in town to accommodate and absorb those that were evicted - testimony to the tenacity of the cultural network that established itself in the slum-yards in the face of the Stallardist assault on it. The council now turned in desperation to the repressive apparatuses of the central state and demanded "much more police action" in tracking down these evicted slum-dwellers "if the council's actions are to be successful."⁷

These efforts were, however, set back by a new development. In 1926 the Supreme Court ruled that, as the council was only able to offer municipal accommodation to 8,500 people, which was inadequate for the number of people evicted, the proclamation of the Johannesburg area was invalid. This had a debilitating effect on the council's already weak slum clearance programme.

The Doornfontein and Malay location removals were reversed and the slum yards in these areas continued to grow throughout the late twenties. The council was forced to revert to the piecemeal method of closing individual slums. People evicted from these properties were, however, now legally entitled to move from one slum area to another. The slums and the way of life of the people who lived there - the marabi parties, the shebeens, the illicit liquor trade as well as the sordid and unhealthy living conditions - continued to thrive. In 1927 when the slumyard population was estimated to be 40,000 the council could only offer the following public housing to blacks.⁸

Western Native Township	5820
Eastern Native Township	1200
Wemmer Barracks	2000

Salisbury & Jubilee	
Compound	900
Nancefield (Klipspruit)	6300
	16220

In the same year slum landlords in Johannesburg were said to be netting £50,000 per month from the lucrative business that resulted.⁹ There were a number of reasons for the failure of the local state, in Johannesburg, to narrow the gap that existed between the industrial and commercial growth of the town and its ability to house its black workforce. These will be examined below. In chapter 2 it was argued that "of all constraints operating on the local state, the inability to finance social expenditure appears the most significant of all."¹⁰ This basic structural factor underlay all the factors that weakened the local state's attempt at segregation.

The state's attempt to allocate responsibility for black urban housing to the local town council, without providing the necessary finances, was hopelessly unrealistic. White ratepayers in the town had already expressed strong opposition to shouldering this burden. Moreover in a society geared to profit maximization on the basis of extremely low wages, this "solution" simply engendered a series of further contradictions within the local state, between the local and central levels of the state and ultimately between the privileged white urban residents and the newly proletarianized black classes in the towns.¹¹

The words of an official government report effectively summarize the situation that developed in the 1920's:

"During the first twelve years of Union the absence of any definite local responsibility for the welfare of urban Natives led to a most undesirable growth in Native slumdom and unsocial tendencies. Demands for more adequate and effective government of the urban Native population and for an improvement in their conditions of residence led to the passing of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act in 1923. Under this Act the obligation was fairly placed on the municipalities to shoulder the financial burden of providing adequate housing and urban amenities for the Natives; but in the absence of any effective machinery to ensure the proper carrying out of the intentions of Parliament by the municipalities, progress was neither uniform nor spectacular."¹²

1) "The Absence of Effective Machinery" - Contradictions Within the Local State in the 1920's.

The paralyzing effect of the absence of state subsidies for local housing projects was exacerbated by the particular fiscal system of local government that developed

historically. From 1918 onwards the local state relied on a rating system which taxed the value of property in the town and on profits from the services (transport, sanitation, sewerage, ~~water~~ lighting, etc.) it provided for its revenue.

This fiscal base to local government was extremely narrow. All government and railways property was exempted from local rates¹³ and the influence of mining capital over the central state was reflected in the inability of local government to tax proclaimed mining land, which amounted to one third of the town's property.¹⁴ Taxes on mining and manufacturing industries profits accrued to the central state. All this meant that "Except qua property owners in the city, the great interests centred in Johannesburg did not contribute to the city's finances ... Thus the burden of providing the city's finances fell mainly on the city's petty bourgeoisie and - as tenants - its working classes."¹⁵

These classes, who were the mainstays of Stallardism and fierce opponents of the non racial slums and the popular culture that flourished in these, were bitterly opposed to subsidizing the reproduction needs of the black workforce, employed by the growing manufacturing industry in Johannesburg. Most of these industrial concerns were small enterprises which employed less than 25 workers and were not obliged by law to provide housing for their black workforce.¹⁶ In this situation, said Moffat to a Select Committee of Inquiry in 1928, "it is practically ... that the Municipality has to stand the cost of housing and that helps the employer to have the native labour at a cheaper rate."¹⁷

This was a situation that white ratepayers resented intensely. In 1922, for example, the town's ratepayers had to meet a deficit of £7251 for the building of houses at Western Native Township. The township was close to town and this reduced the value of nearby property values. These two factors caused local ratepayers to protest so strongly that the matter was referred to a Select Committee of Native Affairs in 1922.¹⁸

The opposition by the local petty bourgeoisie and the local state to subsidizing an industry that was itself exempt from local taxation was articulated in 1925 when the Public Health Committee of the Council announced that "native housing provided, or to be provided by the council, will be severely taxed," if large employers of labour did not "particularly in industrial areas themselves provide the necessary housing."¹⁹ This reliance by capital on the local state for the provision of housing for its workforce was also commented on by a location superintendent in 1930 - "the traditional policy of treating urban native locations and villages as reservoirs of labour to supply the demands of European employers still reflects a large

volume of European opinion especially in the northern provinces.²⁰ The low wages paid by industry also imposed a limit on the rentals that the local state could charge for municipal housing - holding up its building projects in the locations and allowing the slums to thrive. Rents in Johannesburg often consumed one third to half the income of black workers and the situation led a leading liberal spokesman to comment that "the truth is that industry and commerce are benefitting at the expense of both the municipality and the workers."²¹

This strain on the local ratepayers was increased by the growth of a large lumpen-proletariat and reserve army of labour in town. The Pact period of government is traditionally seen as one involving a consolidation of segregation and labour controls. Proctor disagrees with this. He argues that Pact policy was to maintain whites in employment on the mines and in the railways, post offices and municipalities at state expense while at the same time deliberately to allow a flow of cheap labour from the reserves and farms into the towns to serve the manufacturing sector. Although the 1927 Native Administration Act had given the government power to tighten the pass laws, the policy of the Department of Native Affairs was to allow african migration to the urban areas to continue almost unchecked.²² The reasons for the existence of a growing reserve army of labour and lumpenproletariat in the towns have already been discussed. This explains the paradoxical situation which developed, where "capital (mining and industrial) continued to call forth migrant workers from the rural areas of Southern Africa while, at the same time, creating an expanding surplus population in the urban centres."²³ In 1924 the Johannesburg Pass Office dealt with a case that clearly illustrates the situation that prevailed and the role that the slums played in this. A crippled african man called Zerubabel had his application for a daily labourer's pass turned down because, in the words of the Pass Officer;

"in view of the surplus of labour on the reef
it is impossible for the native to obtain
employment and I recommend that he be expatriated."²⁴

Zerubabel was then given permission to reside with friends at 18th Street, Vrededorp until his repatriation could be arranged. Whether he actually left town or disappeared into the refuge offered by the slums to the lumpenproletariat was not recorded.²⁵

In 1927, well before the effects of the depression were felt, the Joint Council was already pointing to the existence of a "floating population of unemployed and in some cases unemployable natives, who have been forced to come to the towns because of the poor status of the african on the land."²⁶ The depression and post depression years obviously saw a massive growth in these classes and the size of the urban african population nearly doubled between 1930 and 1936.²⁷

The role of this reserve army in the town in maintaining a pattern of accumulation based on wages paid according to single men was clear to the state as well as to other observers of the labour market. One official report in the late thirties argued that:

"It must be said that most employers of native labour whether they be housewives or businessmen, or industrialists or farmers, are very little concerned with future political and sociological considerations. Such considerations are remote from their daily lives until they become urgent. What interests the industrialists is the economics of the industries, and considered merely from our economic point of view, it is obviously more profitable to have readily available an idle reservoir of native industrial workers than to wait on the uncertain recruitment of reserve natives or the appearance of voluntary labour coming from the rural areas."²⁸

And in 1940 an MP speaking in parliament illustrated, quite clearly, that the ruling classes had long been aware of the classical role played by the reserve army of labour in the accumulation process:

"If there are over 100 natives left over every day in a town like Johannesburg then it is very easy for people in Johannesburg to get adequate labour ... I know that the Minister will be told that there are no superfluous natives in the urban areas because under the capitalist system ... it is to the advantage of the employers that there should be as much labour as possible which cannot get any other employment than what employers offer them."²⁹

The local state was, however, already strained by the burden of maintaining the employed sections of the working class and refused to accept responsibility for the unemployed and the marginalised people. In the 1920's it was accordingly forced to allow the slumyards to survive as a form of housing, for the surplus population, which did not draw on revenue from the town's rates. In 1922, for example, the Medical Officer of Health reported that, until the local state acquired powers to "control the ingress and continued residence in their districts of natives other than those who came to definite mining or other employment," he was not prepared to order the demolition of slum properties.³⁰ In 1927 while there were about 1000 Insanitary Properties on the lists of the local Public Health Department only 50 orders for the closure of these properties were obtained from the magistrate in Johannesburg.³¹

The contradictions within the workings of the local state were further exacerbated by the position of white labour in the building industry. Organized white labour was clearly a major force behind the Stallardism of the Labour Party and the segregationist provisions of the 1923 Urban Areas Act. However the fiscal nature of local government placed some white workers in a contradictory class position. The

power of the white building workers had been shown in their strike of 1919 - the longest in South Africa's history.³² These unions stubbornly refused to allow the use of cheap black labour or black self housing schemes in the municipal locations. It was calculated, at the time, that it cost £57 to build a 4 roomed location house if africans were allowed to build their own homes and £100 if a black contractor was used. Municipal schemes which used white artisans were forced to pay £200 to £250 for the same sized house. Thus the Bloemfontein council, which used the first system, was able to house 25,000 blacks at no cost to the ratepayers while it was estimated that the cost to the ratepayers of Johannesburg of housing the same number of people would be £600,000.³³ As a result the council only housed 12,000 africans in 1923 - while the slumyards were left to absorb the majority of the 70,000 africans who were estimated to be living in the town outside of the locations.³⁴

Because of the contradictory demands of white labour, for protected employment and for a segregated white town, ^{the local state} was, as a result, further constrained in its attempts to control and clear the slumyard population. As the Joint Council commented:

"it is surely obvious therefore that any scheme of building, at all commensurate with the necessity of the case, which involves building with white labour under ordinary Trade Union regulations, is really put out of court from the start by the expense it would entail."³⁵

So serious were the problems thus presented that in 1926 the Secretary for Native Affairs even urged that white labour employed on location building sites should be excluded from agreements under the Industrial Conciliation Act. His reasons were that:

"the success of the policy of segregation in the urban areas may be said to depend on the fact that the provision of housing accommodation for natives in locations does not become too heavy a burden on the general body of ratepayers."³⁶

The lack of financial assistance from the government limited the number of personnel that could be employed by the municipality. As a result the machinery of local government was inadequate for the tasks imposed upon it by the central state. It took the local state four years to separate the administration of black housing from that of the town's Zoo under the Parks and Estates Committee and to establish a separate Department of Native Affairs. Even after the department was established the local state was characterized by a high degree of bureaucracy and by an absence of coordination.³⁷ The Native Affairs Department and the Public Health Department shared responsibility for the building of black housing and the clearing of the city's slums but were unable to coordinate these tasks effectively. The Murray Thornton Commission found in 1935 that the Public Health Department was "not sufficiently elastic to

continue to function with the same efficiency as the NAD in the face of difficulties created mainly by the rapid expansion of the city."³⁸

One other route to resolving the housing problem was also blocked by the liberal reform movement and their allies, the temperance campaigners. These were also able to exercise much influence over some sections of the local state on the issue of the municipal monopolization of beer - thereby widening the splits that existed within the local state and at the same time delaying municipal beer sales as a "solution" to the town council's fiscal crisis. From 1923 onwards the Medical Officer of Health of Johannesburg and the police authorities strongly recommended the introduction of a municipal beer monopoly under the Urban Areas Act. In 1927 the municipality created a Native Affairs Department and Graham Ballenden, the manager of this department, added his voice to this demand. The reasons were obvious - in 1927 it was estimated that revenue from beer would enable the council to build 50 township houses with white labour and 75 with african labour without drawing on the town's general rates.³⁹ The churches, liberal and temperance bodies however mounted a vocal and coordinated campaign against the proposed introduction of municipal beerhalls into Johannesburg. The effectiveness of this campaign was reflected when, in 1924, the Medical Officer of Health expressed extreme disappointment at the council's decision to bow to liberal pressure and not to introduce the system. He stated that, "in view of ... large sums of money needed for Municipal Housing of natives, and of the large revenue derived by Durban, from its regulated manufacture and sale, the Medical Officer of Health hopes that some day the Council may perhaps see fit to reconsider the matter."⁴⁰ By 1927 the balance of forces in the council had not changed. Ballenden, the manager of the municipal Native Affairs Department, was unable to defeat the liberal lobby in his attempt to implement the "Durban" system, despite support from the police and the central state. In 1928 the proponents of municipal beer halls intensified their campaign and called for a referendum on the issue. After 130 hours of debate in the council these moves were again defeated - although the council was left deeply divided over the issue. The town council's Native Affairs Committee even overruled its own manager of Native Affairs on this occasion.⁴¹ A special meeting of the committee noted that there was strong opposition from the Witwatersrand Church Council, the Transvaal Missionary Association and the South African Temperance Alliance to the monopolization of beer and that "Native opinion seems to be unanimous in its opposition to the Municipal or Government sale of Kaffir beer." These factors caused it to decide against the selling of beer.⁴²

During and after the depression new attempts to introduce beer halls to Johannesburg were once more defeated. In 1931 the Native Affairs Committee again overruled its

departmental manager and reiterated the position that "Kaffir Beer Houses" should not be opened in Johannesburg.⁴³ By 1935 the situation had not changed. In that year the Native Affairs Committee bowed to liberal pressure and rejected a new proposal, for the municipal sale of beer to blacks, by 16 votes to 9.⁴⁴

The local state was thus prevented, by conflict within the ranks of the town's dominant classes, from implementing a scheme to make the black working class pay for its own housing - a scheme which the local Native Affairs Department believed was indispensable "to eliminate, to a large extent, shebeens and native liquor dens"⁴⁵ and which the Medical Officer of Health believed would "lighten the very heavy burden on ratepayers of the cost of producing native housing and also enable local authorities to face the problem more effectively."⁴⁶

Corruption accompanied the bureaucratization of the local state and on more than one occasion this delayed the implementation of slum clearance programmes in the city. For example, two brothers, Getzel Goldberg and Sam Goldberg - "the Warwicks of Ferreirastown" were said to have much influence over the council at this time - "an influence that derived from interest in Ferreirastown slum property." And in 1929 a commission of inquiry reported cases of people kissing councillors feet and bribing them in order to get licences to open one of the "Kaffir Eating Houses" that proliferated in the slums.⁴⁷ These businesses were a major form of local commerce and their owners clearly did not support the principals of Stallardism - contrary to the general position adopted by the local commercial bourgeoisie. Again intra class conflict at the local level crippled any attempt by the local state to destroy the slumyards.

Because of the inadequate fiscal system of local government between 1924 and 1927 the Native Revenue account accumulated a deficit of £20,000 and the council was forced to subsidize this fund from the town's general rates throughout the twenties.⁴⁸ In 1927 the council complained that large numbers of black women were flocking into the towns and that it cost the council £15,000 per annum to house 100 black families and that the council was "not able to reach finality in the segregation and housing of natives in this area."⁴⁹ In 1931 Councillor Immink addressed the Federation of Ratepayers, pointing out that local government had a deficit of £42,569 and that the total loss on public housing, that year, had been between £45,000 and £50,000.⁵⁰ This financial strain on the ratepayers of the city - imposed by the policy of the central state - led to an intensification of tension between the local and central levels of the state, which in turn further fragmented the response of the dominant classes to the slumyards and popular culture in the city.

2) Conflicts Between Central and Local State Authorities

In the 1920's and early 1930's a recurring split emerged between the local and central state departments responsible for urban african affairs - over two related issues. Firstly, as has been argued, the central state was obliged to allow a steady flow of labour from the rural areas into the towns and was prepared tacitly to accept the existence of a reserve army of labour for manufacturing capital in the towns. This attitude of the state was diametrically apposed to the interests of the white petty bourgeoisie and working class in the towns - and to those of the local state authorities who began to make increasingly vociferous demands, in the twenties, for stricter influx control powers to be placed in their hands.

Local authorities all over the Union had established a reputation for a particularly repressive approach to segregation and to the administration of black housing. These state apparatuses, reflecting the racism of their white urban constituencies, had been able to override the liberal programme for urban segregation in 1923. At the same time the central state following the mass struggles in 1918, 1919, 1920 and 1922, was wary of the potentially disruptive effects of a policy of segregation that would leave many workers homeless and would undoubtedly antagonize the black petty bourgeoisie on the Witwatersrand. This partly explains why central state authorities, like the Secretary for Native Affairs, so often overruled the Johannesburg town council's attempts at Stallardist style urban segregation.

The central government could have helped ease the local government's predicament if they made more money available. Instead at the same time as allowing this influx of africans into the town at the expense of local ratepayers the government was gathering an extensive revenue from pass fees, compound fees and the registration of service contracts (See Chapter 2 pp. 75-76). None of this revenue was handed over to the local authorities and the central state also only provided housing loans to local government for white subeconomic housing. This the Johannesburg town council found useless because "the necessity for assisted white dwellings, whatever it might be, was relatively negligible compared with the urgent necessity for segregation and the decent housing of natives."⁵¹

The resulting antagonism on the part of local ratepayers led to mounting tensions between local and central levels of the state in the late 20's. Immediately after the 1926 Supreme Court decision, which declared the proclamation of Johannesburg under the Urban Areas Act invalid, the council pointed out that it was only prepared to be responsible for accommodating employed black workers in the towns. It noted the existence of a "large number of native females who are not required for normal requirements and who ... are merely resident in the area for the purpose of

prostitution, illicit liquor making and other crimes." It argued that the provisions of the 1923 Act for the expulsion of "the idle and disorderly" were difficult to apply to these women and the council began demanding amendments to the Act to allow for increased local powers of influx and efflux control.⁵² The following year the Turriffontain and Forest Hill Ratepayers Associations complained that they had to finance an "enormous" expenditure on black housing and at the same time did not have any control over the movement of africans into and out of the city. They complained that the Urban Areas Act, instead of facilitating urban segregation, was "turning Johannesburg into a recognized residential town for natives."⁵³ Later that year the manager of the Municipal Native Affairs Department, reported that the capital cost of accommodating an african family in a municipal location was £187 per annum and that half a million pounds had already been spent in an attempt to meet this need. Unless the council was granted strong influx control powers, he warned, "the council could go on spending money indefinitely without finding a solution."⁵⁴

In October 1927, as a result of these pressures from the local state, the Minister of Native Affairs agreed to meet a delegation from the town council to discuss amendments to the Urban Areas Act. This failed to satisfy the town council. As a result Johannesburg and other municipalities intensified their campaign. In 1928 the annual conference of municipal representatives asked for amendments to the Urban Areas Act so that they could be provided with greater influx control powers. They also asked for the establishment of work colonies where unemployed women could be sent in terms of Section 17 of the Urban Areas Act.⁵⁵ In 1929 the Native Affairs Committee of the Town Council set up a Select Committee to investigate the number of africans in excess of the town's labour requirements, the lack of machinery to deal adequately with the removal of "undesirable or unemployed natives" and to report on ways of amending the Urban Areas Act to allow the council to counter these problems.⁵⁶ The local state in Johannesburg, however, had to wait until after the depression for more effective central state intervention into the housing situation in the towns.

In the meantime the absence of effective slum clearance campaigns on the part of the town council meant that the town's ruling classes had to rely increasingly on the central state's repressive force - the South African Police - to control the illicit liquor trade in the slums. The expense that this involved became another source of tension between central and local government. As the town's ruling classes debated the advantage of three alternative strategies of controlling the liquor trade - total prohibition, licenced and controlled home brewing or the municipal monopoly systems - the police mounted an "incessant relentless war" on the slumyard liquor trade.⁵⁷ Liquor and pass raids were intensified by the use of the pick-up

van, which "due to its mobility, its sudden and unexpected appearances" became "a terror to evil doers" and a notorious symbol of oppression for black South Africans from that period on.⁵⁸

Whole yards were often ploughed up in police searches for liquor stored underground. In 1930, 9700 blacks were arrested on the Reef alone, out of a national total of 15,995, for drunkenness.⁵⁹ Only 1341 whites were arrested for the same crime. In the same year, 15,252 africans were convicted for the possession of illicit liquor as against one white man. 10,000 of these convictions were for "skokiaan" and 3,500 for "kaffir beer". Only 1500 convictions were for the possession of "European liquor".⁶⁰ Heavy fines for these offences were paid into the municipal revenues. Beerbrewing and the shebeens were, however, too deeply rooted in the defensive culture of the yards to be defeated in this way. Although thousands of gallons of liquor were unearthed and although a large number of blacks were arrested for drunkenness, the trade survived.

Corruption in the police force was also exploited by shebeen owners. According to an african mine clerk giving evidence to the Illicit Liquor Commission:

"a man who is in the C.I.D. has about four or five women whose duty it is to brew and sell beer for him, and he goes around collecting money from these women. When a raid is planned he warns them first. In the district in which I live is a man who has a small distillery and the police actually came there every Saturday night, have a dance, and of course consume as much liquor as they wish."⁶¹

Faced by such corruption, and by the increasingly sophisticated methods of concealing beer and of warning, the Chief Inspector of Police for Johannesburg admitted that prohibition had been an expensive failure.⁶²

The cost to the central state of expanding the police force and the law courts in order to conduct this ineffective war of attrition against slummyard culture was high.⁶³ This led the Chief Inspector of Police in Johannesburg to complain that the lack of suitable housing and recreation for natives when not at work "was the major reason for the trade"⁶⁴ and the State insisted "that the ordinary force should not function as revenue collectors for the municipality."⁶⁵

aficans to the towns.

Because of this strain on the resources of the police force, the SAP supported the local Native Affairs Department in its attempts to establish a municipal monopoly of beer and argued, against the liberal reform movement, that prohibition was a failure.⁶⁶ One perceptive policeman commented on the contradictions at play on this issue when he said "kaffir eating house keepers would suffer financially in the various municipalities if the government opened up kaffir beer and wine shops because their customers would go to such places the government must not consider their interests, they must look after the interests of the millions of native labourers in the country which are an asset to the state."⁶⁷ The local authorities and the liberal movement, on the other hand, blamed the central police force for the lawlessness in the slums and locations. This was reflected in an angry outburst by the Benoni Town Council that "the maintenance of law and order is a state obligation. The proper policing of the location is a state matter."⁶⁸

This was just another manifestation of the contradiction underlying the administration of state policy for the control and reproduction of the black urban proletariat and partly explains why the central state forced the Johannesburg town council to implement the municipal beer system in 1937. In that year Smuts himself argued that "we make impossible laws in this country and expect the police to carry them out" and that ineffective local state actions were "imposing such a strain on the natives and the government - the administration of justice and the policing of this country - that a change is becoming imperative in the public interest."⁶⁹

In order to understand the increasing rapprochement between the local and central state authorities in the late thirties as expressed in Smuts' speech, it is necessary to examine the effects of the depression on the State's willingness to pursue a more vigorous policy of urban influx control and segregation and on its financial capacity to implement such a policy.

3) The Depression and its Aftermath

By the time the depression hit South Africa in 1930 Johannesburg was still a city of slums. It was only during and after the depression, that the State was able to resolve some of the contradictions that had allowed slumyard culture to survive for so long after the passing of the 1923 Urban Areas Act. Both capital and the state were alerted in these years to the dangers of unemployment, of the mounting congestion in the cities and of the increase in a militant and non racial consciousness that grew up in these conditions of unemployment. The economic boom that followed the depression, in turn, provided the state with the financial resources - the shor-

tags of which had been at the root of the failure of its "urban native policy" in the 20's - to begin implementing its plans for the control and reproduction of black labour in the cities.

The harsh effects of the depression on the black and white working classes in the towns have already been examined. Mention too has been made of the non racial political struggles on the part of the urban poor that accompanied the depression. The white working class which had been effectively coopted in the 1920's was, during these years, showing signs of detaching itself from an alliance with the dominant classes and joining in with the struggles of black workers.

During the depression congestion in the slums also worsened and the council, faced by falling revenues, was forced to cut back on its public housing programme and other projects.⁷⁰ A spokesman for the white ratepayers of the city also noted that an effect of the depression was "the fact that Asiatics were invading every part of the town and ... the public would have to be alive to the fact that this state of affairs would grow".⁷¹

White ratepayers in Doornfontein and Brixton were said to be on the "verge of a revolution" as slum conditions worsened in that part of the city and they demanded that the area be proclaimed under the Urban Areas Act and cleared of slums immediately.⁷² The illicit liquor trade, already unmanageable, grew to enormous proportions during and after the depression, especially as poor whites and "coloureds" began entering the trade and selling white liquor to blacks.⁷³

In 1934 the Deputy Commissioner of Police on the Witwatersrand articulated the concern felt by the dominant classes at the destabilizing effects of the depression:

"Johannesburg has a mine population of 53,000, a native slum and township population of 100,000 of whom 40% are females. The immoral cum loafer population is about 15,000 and all are controlled by a very small police force."⁷⁴

As the depression lifted the state began to show an increasing concern for the urban situation. At the same time material conditions allowed for the healing of some of the fractures within the dominant classes that had prevented the implementation of Stallardism for so long. Some of the reasons for this can be found at a national level. During the depression, and especially after the formation of the Fusion government, the state showed increasing signs of concern for the standard of living of white wage earners, the interests of local commerce and the labour shortages of the agricultural sector - which experienced the worst and longest effects of the

depression. The Stallardist programme of urban segregation and harsh influx controls, as a result, drew a more enthusiastic response from the central state during the 1930's. The mining boom after 1933 and the explosion of manufacturing industry generated a wealth that the state was able to tap in order to implement such a programme. The excess Profits Tax on mining provided one third of state revenue between 1933 and 1939 (an increase of £98.5 m to £295.7m) and this made available the fiscal basis for increased subsidies to these classes.⁷⁵ Extensive aid was provided to farmers, Iscor which was planned in 1924 came on stream in 1934, and the "civilized labour policy" was put into effective practice in this decade. Import rates were reduced for industries with the appropriate white labour policy. During the depression 30,500 white men found jobs in sheltered employment, in government departments and the railways and 8000 in municipal public works subsidised by the state.⁷⁶ More significantly for our purposes subeconomic housing for whites now received generous assistance from the state and loans under the Housing Act were increased. "The most important factor in furthering improved conditions was the provision of adequate funds by the State", said one official report in 1937.⁷⁷ Despite the heavy taxation imposed on the mines this sector of capital was not neglected. Bloch argues that there were many areas of interdependence between the state and mining capital and the mining industry still had to show profits for the policies of the Fusion government to be implemented.⁷⁸

After the Depression many local authorities were galvanized into action by the impact of the depression. Julian Cohen shows, for example, how the Benoni Council was determined to improve conditions in its black location in order to bolster secondary industrial growth in the town. According to this Council "... the location is inseparably linked with the European town by laws of health and hygiene. The native supply is the economic lifeblood of the home store and of local industry."⁷⁹

Departments of the local state in Johannesburg were also aware of the need to make its locations more conducive for the productivity of manufacturing capital. The Johannesburg City Engineer argued in 1933 that transport costs for the working classes had to be lowered. He noted that when the distance of a location from the city forced workers to use public transport, "then the cost of the same will put up his cost of living and ultimately his wages. In this connection it would be realized that an increase in wages or a loss of energy if the worker had to walk to work will result in putting up production costs and react to the detriment of the industries and commercial activities of the area."⁸⁰

This increasing concern for black housing by the local states was made further possible by the post depression economic boom which solved many of the economic

difficulties that the local state had faced in the 1920's.

Among the principle obstacles preventing the local state in Johannesburg from providing housing for the towns newly proletarianized black workforce were; the narrow base on which the town's revenue rested, the small amount of public property owned by the town and the tendency of property capital in the form of large land monopolies to hold onto its land for speculative purposes or to sell it at exorbitant prices to the council - thus severely limiting the resources available for public housing in the town. (See Chapter 2)

As the Depression began to lift the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce predicted that the value of property in the central districts - precisely those areas where slumyards and congestion had been allowed to develop by speculating property owners - was bound to rise due to "the amount of income they will return" as commerce expanded in the city and sought more office space.⁸¹

This rise in land values had a double effect on the city council's slum clearance schemes - it increased the city's revenue from rates levied on land and made more property available for white housing schemes and municipal compounds, as property owners decided that the most profitable moment had arrived to develop or sell their land for residential purposes.

By 1934 the depression, as far as the building industry was concerned, had lifted and in 1936 and 1937 the building rate reached record levels in the city. (See Table below)

Annual Volume Of Building Work in Johannesburg 1930 - 1940⁸²

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Value</u>
1930/31	6,646	£3,080,564
1931/32	7,329	2,931,523
1932/33	5,863	1,707,903
1933/34	6,922	3,928,738
1934/35	6,962	5,840,155
1935/36	10,594	8,740,801
1936/37	11,522	11,420,353
1937/38	9,175	8,392,688
1938/39	8,128	6,549,882
1939/40	7,927	3,892,858

Many property owners were now prepared to sell their land to the council, in sharp contrast to earlier years, (see Chapter 2). In 1937 the council bought land from the African Land and Investment Company in Claremont and held this for the purposes of a white or 'coloured' subeconomic housing scheme.⁸³ In 1938 Rand mines agreed to sell land to the council in Denver for the purpose of building a hostel and the city's second municipal beer hall. The Johannesburg Investment Company gave up its mineral rights to land in Brixton and sold it to the council - for a jail to be built. And the Cayfield Syndicate Company also sold proclaimed mining land to the council near Denver for the purpose of building another beer hall.⁸⁴

In 1934 the city's revenue had increased so much that the Chairman of the Finance Committee was able to announce that the estimated income for 1933/1934 was £65,011 more than anticipated. The financial position of the city was euphorically described as "strong and can challenge comparison with any other municipality in the world." The Ratepayers Association, uncharacteristically, was even led to request a reduction in township rents for blacks. The credit standing of the city was sound enough for it to borrow £2m in late 1934 for public housing and at the same time reduce the tariffs for water, electricity and gas in the city.⁸⁵

The annual report of the Department of Native Affairs for 1936 also showed that despite deficits in many municipal "Native Revenue Accounts" the availability of local revenue meant that, now,

"the majority of local authorities have shown a liberal attitude in such cases, meeting the deficits by advances from their general funds free of interest and sometimes even by means of out and out grants."⁸⁶

Apart from this availability of finance on a national and local level, a number of other factors impelled the local state to take new account of welfare and reproduction of the black working class. The Native Economic Commission warned that underdevelopment in the Reserves had resulted in the "creation of desert areas" and "appalling poverty" and "raised the spectre of starvation".⁸⁷ The Commission noted that reserve production had virtually ceased and that the farms were becoming the major forms of labour supply to the towns. On these farms class struggle over the terms of labour tenancy intensified and younger sons and daughters of labour tenants chose to desert the towns rather than submit to the baasskap of white farmers.

In the 1930's "it became necessary for boys and girls to go away to the towns to earn money at the earliest possible time in order to buy clothes and supplement the home food supplies."⁸⁸ According to the Tomlinson Commission, By 1936, the black urban proletariat was made-up of 46% of people from white farms, 8% from the "Bantu Areas"

and 29% from the town itself.⁸⁹ A section of the black urban proletariat and industrial reserve army had, since the late teens, always been dependant on the city to meet the costs of its reproduction. In the 1930's the size of this class increased dramatically and the Joint Council noted that "a very large proportion - if not the greater part - of these workers had broken away from all tribal connections and is dependant entirely upon wages earned in the towns."⁹⁰ Between 1932 and 1936 the black labour force in the Southern Transvaal had grown from 36,153 to 80,772.⁹¹ In 1935 an Interdepartmental Commission reported that urban "poverty is widespread; and if agitation for improved conditions should develop, the Witwatersrand is marked out as a storm centre. The conception of strikes has been familiarized to the minds of the natives."⁹²

The following table illustrates the truth of this statement:⁹³

Year	Strikers	Unionized Workers	Year	Strikers	Unionized Workers
1933	300	31,000	1937	4,500	35,200
1934	800	37,400	1938	3,700	37,500
1935	1,400	29,200	1939	4,800	36,600
1936	1,600	35,100			

The State could clearly not ignore the danger of mass militancy in these conditions of proletarianization and began to undertake a range of measures to protect the basic levels of black working class reproduction.

Manufacturing capital in this period was still geared to patterns of accumulation that did not favour any extensive capitalist subsidization of black housing or other material supports for the reproduction of the black urban proletariat. There had been some mechanization of industry during the 1930's but this was combined with the growth of a number of small factories which had a less mechanized labour process. A government commission in 1941 noted that most factories were small, undercapitalized and operating below their optimum strength.⁹⁴ Although there were some exceptions, manufacturing capital tended to rely on the large reservoir of unemployed workers in the towns for its expansion on the basis of low wages. However as conditions worsened in the towns some sectors of capital began expressing a concern for the reproduction levels of their black workforce and the effects that these were having on industrial stability. In 1937 the Federated Chamber of Industries resolved that because of the increase in strikes in the preceding years "the government is therefore requested to ... go into the question of native wages and betterment of labour conditions on a national basis without delay."⁹⁵ In 1934 Assocon passed a resolution at its annual congress which referred more specifically to the need for attention to be paid by the state to the black working classes' urban

environment:

"This congress considers that the full utilization of the native labour resources of the Union is dependant on an improvement in native wages, housing and health and the encouragement of habits of industry among natives."

At the same time, the Congress strongly requested "administrative action" on "matters relating to native wages, housing, health and efficiency."⁹⁵

In this period, liberal arguments for increased wages and widespread calls for subsidized housing, preventative medicine, assistance to the unemployed and subsidized foods had more impact.⁹⁷

In the early 1930's the state introduced its plans for a compulsory state run unemployment insurance fund to which employers and workers would have to contribute and which would cover workers of all race groups.⁹⁸

In 1938 the Department of Native Affairs reported that "the improved financial position of the Union ... has permitted the allocation of large sums to subeconomic housing."⁹⁹ In the same year the Manager of the Council's Native Affairs Department wrote:

"that slum clearance is necessary to the social and economic welfare of the community is obvious ... To wait for or expect private enterprise to provide this housing accommodation for the mass of people being displaced from the slum areas would be out of the question, and the duty to do so consequently devolves onto the local authority. Fortunately the Government has come to the assistance of local authorities and is providing capital, where necessary, on terms which make it possible for them to embark on sub-economic housing schemes on a large scale, for all sections of the community."¹⁰⁰

Material conditions and the balance of forces within the dominant classes had clearly altered in the 1930's and prompted the central state to intervene more effectively in the sphere of reproduction of black labour generally and in the clearance of Johannesburg's slums in particular. This was given expression in legislation relating to urban policy that was passed during the thirties.

The first sign of this was the introduction, in 1930, of amendments to the Urban Areas Act that the council had long been demanding. These allowed for the proclamation of the whole of Johannesburg, without alternative accommodation being immediately available, thus removing the legal loophole that had reversed the council's slum clearance 'drives' in the early twenties. It was again made an offence for blacks, ordered out of one slum to settle in another in the same area. This change also allowed for a kind of influx control by the local state. The proclamation of the city would make it far more difficult for rural africans to enter the city

migrating to the towns, the state did not impose any greater housing responsibilities on employers, and it refused absolutely to relinquish control over the registration of work contracts or to channel a share of the revenue from pass fees to the local state.¹⁰²

The state also demonstrated a concern for the future of commerce and the local white petty bourgeoisie during the depression. It appointed a commission to enquire into the question of Asiatic Land Tenure in the city which was immediately welcomed by the Federated Ratepayers Association¹⁰³ and the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce as a step toward restriction of trading competition from "Indians" in the city.¹⁰⁴

These amendments to the Urban Areas Act were taken up immediately by the Johannesburg Town Council and it proposed the proclamation of the city by February 1931. The government stalled on this, claiming that alternative accommodation was not yet adequate. As a result the council made plans for the purchase of land to build a new model township to house 80,000 people - Orlando. The council used its powers to proclaim specific sections of the city and by 1931 the central city areas and 93 out of 133 residential suburbs had been proclaimed. Closing orders on insanitary properties increased and in November 1930 and January 1931 5,000 Africans were instructed to move to municipal accommodation by this method. Resistance from the Joint Council and the Non European Ratepayers Association delayed the proclamation of the whole city, but in February 1933 the Minister of Native Affairs agreed to support the proclamation of the city, on condition that black property owners be

town. Thus in 1933, a decade after the Urban Areas Act was passed, the whole of Johannesburg with the exception of Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare was proclaimed.¹⁰⁵ In August 1933 it was reported that, as a result of the proclamation, 200 families were being removed from the city's slums every month.¹⁰⁶

The council was able to capitalize on the state's concern for the social conditions of the poorer ranks of the white working class - that had degenerated badly during the depression. In 1933 it resolved to implement a comprehensive slum clearance and white housing scheme with a view to the "amelioration of the social and economic conditions of certain classes." The council appointed a special committee to conduct a census of the slum areas in the city and to draft a bill designed to make the closing and demolition of slums by the Public Health Department more effective.¹⁰⁷ The council was, however, quick to point out that white poverty and residential congestion was closely tied to the question of black housing and insisted that the new Eradication of Slums Bill would have to be directed at all races in the city's slums.¹⁰⁸ This bill was passed by Parliament in 1934 and its main provisions gave the Public Health Department of the local state the right to declare whole districts as slums instead of the cumbersome system in existence of having to deal with each individual site or building. The new Slums Act also allowed for the expropriation of areas that were declared slums so that they could be used for the purpose of white subeconomic housing schemes.¹⁰⁹ The original purpose of this bill was shown in 1935 when large numbers of properties were declared slums in Bertrams and the council applied for £127,000 from the Central Housing Board to expropriate the area and build the Maurice Freeman white subeconomic housing scheme. It also announced that it planned to build small cottages there as "the herding in tenement blocks of large masses of the poorest members of the community, having the maximum reasons for discontent and despair, would seem the very way to foster extreme political movements."¹¹⁰ The cooptation of the white working class, that began after 1924, required continual attention as it faced new crisis points, as it did during the Depression. The new Act, together with the proclamation of the city was used with devastating effect on the slumyards and the council was able in the process to speed up its public building projects.

By 1935, nearly 3,000 houses had been built in Orlando which accommodated 18,000 people and the township would be able to house another 4,000 people when an additional 1,000 houses, being built, were completed. By 1939 the council had spent almost R3m on public housing for blacks and had built a total of 8,700 houses, of which 5,800 were in Orlando.¹¹¹

Although this was a big advance on the performance of the local state during the

twenties and the depression years the black housing question in the city was by no means resolved. The freehold townships of Alexandra and Sophiatown were becoming enormously overcrowded (See Chapter 6), overcrowding in municipal locations was on the increase and remaining slum areas in the city were becoming heavily congested, with rents increasing by up to £2 for single rooms.¹¹²

The illicit liquor problem, that was closely associated with the existence of slums, was still flourishing and even expanding. The police force was increasingly strained in its 'war' against the trade and was coming under increasing public attack for the harshness of its raids - especially when these threatened to alienate the black petty bourgeoisie. The Police force was also rocked, in the early 30's by a spate of prosecutions, by the Attorney General, against policemen implicated in the liquor trade.¹¹³ These convictions, and public pressure, led to the appointment of a Commission of Enquiry into the police force which reported in 1937 and supported the long standing demand by the police that prohibition be abolished and that the municipal beer hall system be introduced.¹¹⁴

The mines on the Witwatersrand were also complaining loudly at this time about the effect of the illicit liquor trade conducted in locations near the mine compounds, which undermined the discipline of the compound system of control and severely affected the productivity of mine labour. The Nourse and City Deep mines lost 2,000 and 2,080 shifts in one year due to the number of workers that returned drunk from the adjacent area of Prospect Township.¹¹⁵ This slum area was especially notorious for its shebeen life and was singled out for special attack by the mines.¹¹⁶ Opposition from the mines prevented the area from being set aside for occupation by 'coloureds', despite the support of the city council for this schema, and Prospect Township was the third area after Doornfontein and Bertrams to be cleared under the council's new slum clearance powers.¹¹⁷

Faced with these problems the council together with other local councils in the Transvaal began pressurising the government and claiming that "legislation providing for municipal registration and control appears to be the only solution, provided the local authorities receive the fees derived therefrom."¹¹⁸ Up until this point the local Native Affairs Department had not been completely unsympathetic to industry's need for a reserve army of labour in the city. In 1934 Ballenden, the Manager of this department, had reported that "the excess of those workers offering their labour over the jobs vacant allows of a reasonable selection by employers."¹¹⁹ and in 1935 he noted that under the new legislation his department's policy "in regard

permitted to shut down many hundreds of places where Natives were housed under unsatisfactory conditions, and where the employer was unwilling or unable to make any improvements."¹²⁰ By 1931 however the strain of the urban industrial reserve army on the public housing resources of the local state had led to a change in attitude. The government began moving closer to the local state on the question of influx control.

The size of the urban proletariat and the low wages paid by the industry had resulted in a large number of local authorities incurring deficits on their Native Revenue Accounts and having to meet these out of their general funds - in the form of loans or grants.¹²¹ Pressure from local government, and from a white population objecting to the "shanties they saw springing up around their towns",¹²² resulted in the appointment in 1935 of a commission to inquire into the "question of the residence of Natives in urban areas", to suggest ways of enforcing the Stal-lardist principle of "limiting the number of Natives in urban areas to the labour requirements of such urban areas"¹²³ and to suggest amendments to the Urban Areas Act for this purpose.

A conference between the Minister of Native Affairs and Municipal representatives in September 1937 symbolized this increasing rapport. Here Smuts himself summed up the new note in State policy:

"Our towns have been growing fairly rapidly in population and their needs have expanded, too. Naturally a larger labour force is required in connection with their needs, and requirements. We have, also, the great industrial expansion which is going on in this country all the time and which calls for larger labour resources. There is also this further consideration that it is generally useful to have a certain labour supply from which the requirements can be satisfied as the occasion arises, but it is a question whether the numbers now crowding into the towns are not such as to pass all limits and become a real menace to the country."¹²⁴

At the same conference it was mentioned that a section of the Leeuwkop Farm colony had been set aside for women expelled under Section 17 of the Urban Areas Act.¹²⁵

White farmers had complained, throughout this decade, about the lack of influx controls which severely depleted their supplies of labour. The state had also, on a number of occasions, considered favourably the introduction of wine and beer canteens for blacks on the Witwatersrand to provide a market for wine and grain farmers whose exports were drastically affected by the depression. Strong oppo-

During the prohibition years the sale of sprouted corn to blacks was also prohibited. The municipal beer system however allowed for the introduction of municipal corn purchasing cooperative "which would operate directly with the farmer."¹²⁶ These were undoubtedly the factors in mind when Smuts went on in his speech to the conference of municipalities to say,

"... the farming industry of this country is suffering correspondingly, and today one of the greatest difficulties with which we have to deal in the country is this scarcity of farm labour at the same time that there is a surplus of native population, many of them probably unemployed, in the towns."¹²⁷

In 1937, these factors - the effects of the illicit liquor trade on the resources of the police force and the productivity of mine labour, the drain of farm labour into the urban industrial reserve army and the demands that these people made on the rates of the local state resulted in a new set of amendments to the Urban Areas Act. These the Minister of Native Affairs announced were designed to "establish once and for all the policy that Natives should only be permitted to come into the towns in so far as their presence was demanded by the white people."¹²⁸

The Nationalist Party (supported by the majority of farmers) and the Labour Party supported the Bill which became law in the same year. Its main provisions were designed to:

- enable the local state to exercise greater control over the number of africans entering its area of jurisdiction and to allow the removal of 'surplus' africans under certain conditions. For the first time local authorities were able to refuse entry to a workseeker if it was established that a surplus of native labour existed in the area. Women were obliged to obtain certificates from Native Commissioners in their home districts before being allowed to enter and reside in the urban areas.
- compel local authorities to conduct a biennial census of the number of africans in their area, their sexual distribution, employment by occupation and sex and an estimate of the 'reasonable' labour requirements of the city or town.
- allow local authorities to compel any urban employer to house his african workers under conditions subject to municipal approval.
- facilitate the establishment of labour exchanges for the distribution of labour within the urban areas and to facilitate the collection of location rents through employers.
- allow the Minister of Native Affairs to intervene at the expense of any local authority which failed to carry out the objectives of the amendments.¹²⁹

In addition the government announced that if the local authorities did not take immediate steps to implement the municipal monopoly of beer then the option of

home brewing would automatically be implemented. "This proposed change is a radical one", said the council, "with far reaching consequences for Johannesburg"-and one might add for the shebeen culture of the slumyards - as the local state took prompt action, ended prohibition and established the first beer hall in December 1937.¹³⁰

The municipal monopoly of beer had a massive impact on the financing of the city's public housing programme. In the first six months of its existence the beer hall at the Salisbury and Jubilee Compound earned an income of £15,144, while expenditure amounted to only £8,441.¹³¹ After 1938 the council stopped subsidizing the Native Revenue Account from the general revenue because of the spectacular profits - (£166,159 for 3½ years between January 1938 and June 1941) - made from the beer-halls.¹³² Because of this system the Native Affairs Department of the council claimed that it was self supporting and that its activity "does not cost the taxpayer anything."¹³³ In 1939 the Star reported that "Kaffir Beer is becoming big business for the municipalities" enabling them to give "the European ratepayers relief from most of the burden of providing municipal services for the natives in their areas."¹³⁴ In later years, when the Central Brewery in Johannesburg was producing an average of 10,000 gallons of beer per day, "Kaffir Beer" was given a new name - "Pink Gold."

CONCLUSION

Under this concentration of resources behind the policies of the local state the decade long resistance of slumyard culture to Stallardism began to buckle. Between 1933 and 1936 the council was able to clear parts of the Malay Location, Ferreirastown, Vrededorp, Fordsburg and the whole of the densely populated yard areas of Doornfontein, Prospect Township and Bertrams - the latter making way for the establishment of a subeconomic housing scheme for poor whites.¹³⁶ The extent of this dislocation is evident from the fact that with the first closing orders issued under the Slums Act "the number of families requiring to be rehoused are:-"¹³⁷

BERTRAMS: 33 Europeans, 10 Asiatics, 96 Coloured, and 8 Native.

NEW DOORNFONTEIN: 9 European, 27 Asiatics, 106 Coloured, and 468 Native.

PROSPECT TOWNSHIP: 6 European, 19 Asiatics, 10 Coloured, 1,065 Native."

In 1933 the American Board Mission reported that:

"The slum clearance policy of the municipality which has lagged during the past year is now being vigorously proceeded with. Already about 20,000 natives have been cleared from the city. Our Doornfontein Church which was strategically located as long as the slums were there is in danger of being left high and dry by the clearance of the slum population."

And in 1935 it reported that, "the old yards have disappeared. The families have

moved out to the townships and locations."¹³⁸

In 1933, when the council managed to obtain proclamation of the whole city, which it was estimated, would dislodge 43,000 from their homes in the slumyards, only a small proportion of people evicted were settling in the locations.¹³⁹ The initial working/lumpen class strategy was simply to move to slums in other parts of the city. Sophiatown was also able to absorb a number of people dislocated by the council's slum clearance programme. In 1928 its population was 12,000 and the council noted with dismay that in Sophiatown "slums have been created (and) ... yards, quiet as they were yesterday, are known to be the drinking dens of Sophiatown's weekend." However as the council increasingly eliminated the alternative slum areas the capacity of the freehold townships to absorb the dislocated families was strained to its limits - by 1937 the population of Sophiatown had swelled to 17,000.¹⁴⁰ The only solution for slum dwellers was to move to the hated locations and hostels where, by 1938, the council had increased its housing capacity to accommodate 75,000 Africans. In 1937 the manager of ^{the} Non European and Native Affairs Department was able jubilantly to report that,

"the resistance of the natives to the slum clearance process has almost disappeared. Four years ago not more than 12 percent of those evacuated from slum areas actually took up residence in locations and hostels. This figure is now over 90 per cent, and in the present abnormal conditions obtaining, the demand is so keen that all sorts of subterfuge is employed by natives from other areas to secure municipal accommodation."¹⁴¹

In the same year the council applied, for a loan of £1,347,000 from the Central Housing Board to complete the Orlando subeconomic housing scheme and noted optimistically that:

"The housing to be provided from the loan is considered sufficient to complete the elimination of slums within the city and to provide for the housing of all the natives displaced from Prospect Township and Malay Location and to reduce the native population of Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare to owner occupiers."¹⁴²

For the slumdwellers the outcome of these developments was less of a cause for celebration. Under the impact of the council's revitalized "herdings or shepherdings" the culture that they had created - their network of collective and mutual assistance relations - began to crumble. The effect of this on the pattern of popular responses was dramatic as the euphoria briefly expressed by the rulers of Johannesburg was to be extinguished by the mass based community struggles of the 1940's. These are examined in the next Chapter.



Police Raiding Party Searching for Deer.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. See Chapter 2.
2. Local Government Commission, TP 1, 1922, p. 13.
3. See Chapter 2.
4. JCL, Report of the Medical Officer of Health, 1922 - 1924, p. 55.
5. P. Wilkinson, 'Out of Sight...Out of Mind? The Development of African Housing Policy in Johannesburg and The Genesis of Soweto 1902 - 1953', Unpublished Mimeo, p. 8.
6. JCL, Minutes of the City Council, 1924 Vol II, Report of the Public Health Committee, 1/10/1924, p. 725.
7. JCL, Report of the Medical Officer of Health 1922 - 1924, pp. 55 - 56; Wilkinson, 'Out of Sight', p. 18.
8. JCL, Minutes of the City Council, 1927 Vol. I, Report of the General Purposes Committee, 15/2/1927, p. 120.
9. Star, 22/10/1927.
10. See Chapter 2. p. 67.
11. Maud, City Government, p. 102.
12. Report of the Native Affairs Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Working of the Provisions of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act Relating to the Use and Supply of Kaffir Beer, GP S4620, 1942 - 1943, p. 17.
13. Maud, City Government, p. 287.
14. Maud, City Government, pp. 284 - 289.
15. Stadler, 'Birds in the Cornfield', p. 9.
16. See Chapter 2. p. 71

17. Proctor, 'Class Struggle', p. 60.
18. Rich, 'Dilemmas of Liberalism', p. 160.
19. JCL, Minutes of the City Council, 1925, Vol. II, Report of the Public Health Committee, 22/9/1925, p. 750.
20. CPSA, Rheinallt Jones Papers, Box B1, 'The Urban Native Problem', 4/9/1930, mimeo.
21. CPSA, Rheinallt Jones Papers, Box B1, 'Memorandum', no date.
22. Proctor, 'Class Struggle', p. 61.
23. Hindson, 'Pass System', p. 71.
24. CAD, SNA Papers, NTS 953/2/141 'Destitute Natives', Pass Office Johannesburg to Department of Native Labour, 20/2/1924.
25. Pass Office Johannesburg to Department of Native Labour, 20/2/1924.
26. Star, 25/8/27.
27. Proctor, 'Class Struggle', p. 61;
Wilkinson, 'Out of Sight', p. 18.
28. Report of the Native Affairs Commission, U.G. 42, 1941, p. 17.
29. Morris, 'Slavery and Capitalism', p. 252.
30. JCL, Report of the Medical Officer of Health, 1921 - 1922, pp. 21 - 22.
31. JCL, Report of the Medical Officer of Health, 1926 - 1927, p. 28.
32. B. Bozzolli, 'Political Nature ... Ruling Class', p. 176.
33. CPSA, Rheinallt Jones Papers, Box B1, 'The Urban Native Problem', 4/9/1930, mimeo.
34. Wilkinson, 'Out of Sight', p. 18.

36. CAD, SNA papers, NTS 958 5/141, Secretary for Native Affairs to Secretary for Labour, 6/2/1926.
37. Maud, City Government, p. 146.
38. Maud, City Government, p. 145.
39. Umteteli Wa Bantu, 1/9/28.
40. JCL, Report of the Medical Officer of Health, 1922 - 24, p. 54.
41. Star, 27/9/28;
Star, 20/11/28;
Umteteli Wa Bantu 1/9/28;
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CHAPTER 6THE EFFECTS OF URBAN SEGREGATION ON POPULAR URBAN MILITANCY IN THE 1940's

In the 1940's many South African cities witnessed an outburst of popular struggles around local issues, in particular rent, transport, housing and food supplies. These struggles contrast markedly with the passive and defensive approaches to these issues that were embodied in marabi culture in the decades before World War Two. The reasons for these struggles have been fairly extensively dealt with in a number of academic works. Factors like the collapse of the reserve economies and a resultant increase in urbanization, large scale industrialization during the war, the growth of a large industrial reserve army and the hardship experienced by the black working classes because of war time conditions have all been put forward as the causes contributing to the urban movements of the forties.¹ This chapter looks, very schematically, at these factors and gives a very brief description of the urban based 'community' struggles of the decade. However the chapter does not pretend to be an exhaustive account of the struggles of these years. It also does not touch on the large scale trade union struggles that took place during and after the second world war. The aims of this chapter are more limited. It should be seen, rather, as an attempt to conclude this thesis by focusing on one neglected cause of the urban struggles that rocked Johannesburg in the forties - the destruction of marabi culture by means of slum clearance and urban segregation. The strain that this placed on the subsistence levels of Johannesburg's black working classes was a major factor in their increasing militance.

In Chapter 2 it was argued that the growth of capitalism in Southern Africa had generated a large and fairly permanent urban proletariat and lumpenproletariat, as well as a significant black petty bourgeoisie, on the Witwatersrand by the time of the First World War. The second decade of the century was characterized by a series of militant and volatile campaigns being undertaken by these newly formed urban classes. The bucket strike, the "shilling" campaign and the massive antipass campaign of 1919, led by a radicalized Transvaal Native Congress, are all indicative of

However, these militant waves of popular urban struggle declined rapidly. From the 1920's the struggles of Johannesburg dominated classes shifted into a more defensive and seemingly more politically passive phase. Reasons for this are put forward in Chapter 4. For the sake of placing this discussion about urban militancy in the late thirties and forties in context it is worth summarizing the main themes of chapter 4. There it was argued that marabi culture - the most pervasive form of "proletarian" consciousness in Johannesburg between the wars - promoted a collective response to the conditions of urban life amongst the city's black working classes, lumpenproletariat and industrial reserve army that was robust and resilient but which at the same time encouraged defensive and non combative political attitudes amongst these classes. The depth and tenacity of marabi's cultural forms were rooted in their economic and social welfare functions which replaced the precapitalist and kinship structures that had already been eroded in the african reserves. The slumyard dwellers created a range of cooperative and reciprocal arrangements that helped them cope with the brutal conditions of town life. However, these varied forms of collective action and consciousness were not translated into co-ordinated political action to change the living conditions in the yards. There is very little evidence of combined attempts to resist high rentals. Ellen Hellman notes that one attempt to do this in Rooiyard failed hopelessly. Instead the slumdwellers combined their resources and paid the exorbitant rents demanded by the city's rackrenting property owners. Apart from occasional spontaneous attacks on police raiding squads, the slumdwellers concentrated on devising ingenious ways of hiding liquor and warning brewers of the approach of a raiding party - displaying a resilience that continually dismayed the Johannesburg municipality. The informal social welfare institutions that developed were able to provide a measure of security to those rejected by the capitalist wage labour system but very little was done during the 20's and 30's to organise the slumdwellers to challenge this system. Liquor had a very ambiguous role to play, allowing for mutual assistance by the circulation of internal working class resources, but at the same time exacting a heavy toll^{by} both physically and morally dampening political awareness in people - except for brief periods of heightened militancy during the depression. The main political organizations of the time held frequent meetings in the slumyards but failed to organize around conditions prevailing there. This was in marked contrast to the struggles of the late teens and of the nineteen forties when political organizations were forced to respond to a popular anger that was fuelled by an inability to cope defensively with the conditions of urban life. With some exceptions, the ICU failed conspicuously in the twenties to conduct campaigns around "community" issues in the slums. The ANC was based in the slums of Vrede-dorp and Doornfontein at this time, but was dominated by a petty bourgeois leadership that also failed to respond organizationally to the day to day needs of slum

and township communities, which again helped to account for much of the political quiescence of the period. Clearly marabi culture was a collective and tenacious form of resistance to exploitation, but it expressed itself as an attempt by the working classes to cope with and improve the conditions of urban life within the given set of social and political relationships rather than by attempting to challenge and transform these relationships.³

1) The Growth of a New Militancy - Early Signs

By the late 1930's, however, things had begun to change. The nature of popular consciousness was quite clearly changing and moving into a new politically aggressive phase. This has been commented upon by a number of writers. O'Meara for example, points out that although the ANC was dominated by a moderate petty bourgeois leadership throughout the thirties it did begin, in the aftermath of the Hertzog Bills, to draw a younger and more militant generation of activists into its leadership and to undergo a process of reorganization and revitalization. This change in the composition of the ANC's leadership was symbolized by the election of A.B. Xuma as President of the ANC in 1940 - the first person to fill this post who was not at the inaugural conference of the SANNC in 1912.⁴

Walshe also points to a more vocal opposition on the part of the ANC to state policies and legislation in the late 30's. The amendments to the Urban Areas Act contained in the 1937 Native Laws Amendment Act were especially a target of strong criticism. The vehemence of this criticism and the rise to prominence of a new generation of leadership did not nevertheless reflect any radical changes in the class nature of the ANC leadership. Most of the younger men like the Rev. James Calata and Xuma himself came from the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie. However what did happen in the late 30's was a shift by the ANC and its leadership into a position that was more sensitive to the day to day survival needs of the urban poor. In contrast to its qualified acceptance of the Urban Areas Act in the 1920's the ANC's response to the Native Laws Amendment Act was to argue that the law set out, "to perpetuate the antiquated ideal of regarding urban locations as labour reservoirs and not permanent homes for africans."⁵ During the thirties the lack of social welfare and basic public services was an occasional complaint voiced by the ANC and by the Location Advisory Board Congress, with which it cooperated closely. This interpretation of the ANC in the late thirties needs more research before it can be more fully asserted. However, one sign of this direction within the ANC came in 1939 when Councillor Sililo, the ANC spokesman on social services, accompanied a delegation to the government and argued that the stage had arrived when welfare

tion, sheer poverty had made informal assistance impossible and Sililo raised the need for Workmen's Compensation, Pensions and the Blind Persons Act to be extended to blacks. "We think we should share in the social services instead of being forced to go to the Magistrates and the ... Native Affairs Department ... for charity", he said. "Our people have worked hard and have earned a restful old age ... We ask that our people be not shut out from the social services provided in every civilized country."⁶ At least verbally, this was a far cry from the complacent ANC of the twenties. These demands were not, however, translated into effective organization. The ANC articulated no strong concern for an alliance with the emerging black trade unions, which began to organize effectively on industrial lines in the 1930's, and it voiced no consistent demand for their recognition by the State.⁷ While the ANC, restricted its concern about the provision of social services to the urban poor to official delegations the Communist Party, by contrast, attempted to revitalize itself after its collapse during the depression by mobilizing support around issues that affected peoples day to day ability to survive in the city. This organizational orientation had emerged, as we have seen, during the depression and especially in small rural locations. According to Edwin Mofutsunyana a C.P. organizer at the time:

"My organization which believes in day to day issues, not only in theory but in practice had employed every means of all (sic) including legal, not only for the unemployed but for all ... for instance, we had gone to the length of restoring furniture of ejected unemployed during the great depression and fought legal cases. We had been successful to get rations for some of those that the city authorities admitted to be legally their responsibility. Also to get a temporary stoppage of ejectments for rent."⁸

By the late 30's this policy of organizing around the immediate daily needs of the people contributed to the emergence of a number of small localized organizations some of which had links with the C.P. and which together contributed to the escalation of popular militancy in the late thirties.⁹ In 1938 the Transvaal Branch reported to the ANC National Conference that, "since the temporary stagnation of the Congress numerous small organizations have sprung up and they are active in their own sphere." This development was welcomed and used as an argument by the Transvaal branch for a reorganization of the ANC and for more effective cooperation between the national body and smaller organizations at a local level.¹⁰

The first recorded signs of this new mood of militancy and of revitalization of organization at a local level came in the midst of the local state's intensified segregation drives in the mid thirties. The C.P. began to take the lead by responding to the hardships caused by the threat to the slumyards that accompanied urban

segregation. In January 1937 the C.P. Newspaper Umsebenzi noted that, in the face of eviction threats, the coloured and Indian residents of slums in Bertrams had organized themselves into a tenants league and had managed to win a three month extension on their date for eviction. "Their example of forming a Tenants League to defend their interests should be followed", said the party. It was also announced that the residents of Ferreirastown had already formed a tenants committee to fight high rents and for decent housing. A new tactic of bringing cases of high slum rentals before the Rent Board was announced and the local state - the Johannesburg City Council - was identified as the agency responsible for the provision of adequate and decent housing for coloureds in this area.¹¹ Two months later a Coloured Tenants Association was formed which represented residents from Ophirton, Ferreirastown, Bertrams and Vrededorp to fight the council's segregation drives.¹² This was followed by the formation of the Newclare Tenants League, which managed to force landlords to the negotiating table in May 1937 and the Benoni Protest and Watch Committee - both of which were designed to "struggle for better housing and street conditions in the locations."¹³ This kind of local level organizing intensified as the pace of slum clearance and police raids on illegal beer brewers quickened.

When the local state struck at the slums of Bertrams with renewed vigour in May 1937 over 400 families from this area were left homeless. The Communist Youth League led by Josie Mpama and Max Joffe were active in organizing around these events. The C.P. called upon

"all workers and housing organizations to come together and demonstrate against the action of the municipality, and to demand that provision be made immediately for everybody irrespective of colour to have a place to live in."¹⁴

Blankets and clothes were also collected by the C.P. and the Coloured Tenants Association, that it had helped, set up for those evicted. As a result of the activities of these bodies Umsebenzi claimed that the council was forced to vote £4,000 for more housing in Coronationville for coloured families and to delay on the eviction of another 150 families from Bertrams.¹⁵

In 1939 the Guardian reported that the Coloured Urban Tenants Association organized a rent strike by 400 people in the slum area of Vrededorp which lasted for 9 months. A further sign of the popular response to housing shortages and high rentals that were impending was the departure of 30 families from their rooms in Vrededorp to squat in the local church grounds and their refusal to move until the council provided "good houses at reasonable rents."¹⁶ A more general response by urban blacks at this time to the increasing controls placed by the state on their lives and to

the municipal monopoly of beer sales in the townships was to move to informal settlements in peri-urban areas just outside of the area of local state jurisdiction. The report of the South African Native Affairs Commission of 1941 noted that this kind of peri-urban squatting had escalated in the late thirties and wrote that;

"No doubt the attraction to Natives who rent such rooms is the freedom from control which exists in urban locations; but, in most cases, Natives are driven to seek accommodation in these Native townships because of the absence of accommodation provided by the municipality elsewhere."¹⁷

This response to the controls exercised by the local state in the late thirties was also discernible in Benoni where many women left the municipal location to go and live on smallholdings, outside of the town, so that they could brew and sell beer outside of the municipality's reach. Although this response was due to the particular characteristics of the Benoni location at least one writer has suggested that these kinds of activities were a prelude to the massive squatting movements that took place on the Witwatersrand in the forties.¹⁸

The resources of places like Sophiatown, Alexandra Township and Western Native Township were also increasingly stretched to accommodate those who were evicted from the slums and who were flocking into the cities from the rural areas. In Sophiatown hitherto sporadic outbursts over local issues such as rent increases, transport fare increases, the rising cost of food and police beer and pass raids became more frequent. Proctor notes that an editorial in Umsebenzi in 1938 commented on a recent attack on a police van by a crowd armed with stones and sticks and "expressed concern at the increasing tendency of Africans to focus their aggression on the agents of the system instead of the system itself." (Original italics) Tenant mobilization against rackrenting landlords was also a persistent theme in speeches made by Moses Kotane, J.B. Marks and Edwin Mofutsunyana at the Communist Party's regular Sunday afternoon meetings outside No. 2 Gate of Western Native Township.¹⁹ In Western Native Township in 1938 and 1939 a near total boycott of the location's beer hall was organized to protest against the municipal monopoly of beer brewing and the police raids on the township's beer brewers that were designed to enforce this. Here an organisation called the Western Native Vigilance Committee had been formed in 1930 to fight against the seizure of furniture by the town council in cases of rental arrears.²⁰ Now it was revived to fight the system of lodgers permits in the township and to push for the right to brew beer domestically. This committee noted that the only means of subsistence for widows was the right to brew beer and also complained that municipal police were trying to break the boycott of the beer hall by issuing exemptions to the permits, that visitors to the location were obliged to get, to drunks coming out of the beer hall.²¹ This organization also demanded that the new beer hall

in the township be converted into a fruit and vegetable market.²²

More crucially for the struggles of the 1940's some local members of the Communist Party in Alexandra Township - Marks Rammitloa and Schreiner Baduza - took initiative to form the Bantu Tenants Association. The administration of Alexandra township was unique in that it did not fall under the jurisdiction of the town council but the Provincial council and was administered by a Health Committee.

In the late thirties, as we have seen, the population of this township, like Orlando and Sophiatown began to swell. Alexandra became "prized by its occupants as a haven, free of the permit system of locations, and open to all who could find and pay for a nook to sleep."²³ Landlords responded to this massive rise in demand by raising the rent for rooms in yards that were becoming severely congested and unhealthy.

Both Baduza and Dikobe were previously slum dwellers and were now tenants in the township. Baduza describes how one landlord could have over 30 people living in his backyard with only one toilet and one tap for all of them.²⁴ He also describes how landlords would often lock the tap in the yard and then charge tenants for water by the bucket. Dikobe claims that "landlords often let us build our shacks in their backyard. We had to put down an advance payment called 'goodwill' which was not refundable and then pay rent. It was in fact squatting inside the yards".²⁵

"The rentals became too much of a burden. So we started to have street corner meetings to protest against the high rentals. Our slogan was 'we want land.' There was no existing organisation to protect the tenants. So we decided to form the Bantu Tenants Association",²⁶

says Dikobe. This is confirmed by Schreiner Baduza;

"The reason for this organisation was that at that time stakeholders had their own organisation... As a tenant you couldn't take part in those meetings. We decided that we had to have our own organisation to protect the rights of the tenants and subtenants."²⁷

The Bantu Tenant Association's (BTA) first tactic was to exert pressure on the Health Committee. It soon acquired informal recognition on the Committee and was allowed to send representatives to the meetings as observers. Baduza claims that the white members of the Committee were sympathetic to the plight of the tenants and subtenants. No agreement however could be reached with the black landlords on the question of rent and the need for bigger rooms.²⁸ The Health Committee did not have the power to reduce rents and the tenants at this stage began to assert that they were, like other workers in the city, the responsibility of the town council.

At this point an internal community struggle began to merge with a political struggle against the policies of the local state. The next tactic by the B.T.A. was to appeal to the authority of the Rent Board. The Rent Board sent inspectors to the township and Dikobe pressed charges against his own landlord.²⁹

David Harris claims that this tenants' body had links to similar bodies that had been set up in Sophiatown and the slum area of Bertrams under the influence of Dr. Max Joffe of the CPSA and the Communist Youth League. Certainly its tactics were similar. Both these organisations and the tenants association were active in organising the first bus boycott in Alexandra between 1939-40 - when the boycotters succeeded in preventing a rise in transport fees from 4d. to 5d. per trip to town. The boycott was hardly noticed in the press at the time but is also a crucial index of the shift in popular feeling that was taking place at the end of the 1930's.³⁰

This mushrooming of local community organization continued into the early forties. In 1941 a Tenants Defence League, consisting mostly of 'indians' and 'coloureds' and some africans, was established in Fordsburg to fight against high rents.³¹ In 1943 the City and Suburbs group of the Communist Party helped to organize a residents association in that slum area to protest at the official system of taxing africans "like cattle in locations" and to demand the right for good houses for the slum dwellers.³² This increase in the level of organization was not confined to Johannesburg. In Vereeniging in 1941 a meeting, planned to protest at the raising of lodger permit fees and to demand lower rents, was banned under the Emergency Regulation Act and attacked and broken up by police when the meeting took place.³³ In 1942 an organisation known as the Guardian Readers League secured rent reductions in Pretoria locations by making vigorous appeals to the Rent Board.³⁴

This pattern of popular militancy in the urban areas at a local level, the involvement of the C.P. in various ways in some of the organization of these local movements and not always successful attempts by the ANC to co-ordinate these local struggles at a national level continued to characterize much of black politics in the 1940's.

2) The Causes of Urban Militancy in the Forties

The reasons for this shift in popular consciousness and the development of a new militant form of organising around urban issues like rent, beer brewing, transport and food costs - that slumyard culture had dealt with in its own peculiar way - are varied and complex. One major reason for the radicalization of black politics in the 1940's, that has received widespread acceptance, is O'Meara's proposition that by the early forties a permanent proletariat had emerged in the urban areas into

which the ANC could "drop its organizational roots", whereas this structural condition had not existed before.³⁵ This explanation suffers from a number of defects, some of which have already been pointed to. The most important of these are that it ignores the fact that a permanent proletariat had already emerged in the towns by the late teens, that it tends to be mechanistic and abstract in its assumption that the emergence of a proletariat leads automatically to the emergence of proletarian class practices within political movements and that it neglects the actual organizational practices that shaped the pattern of black politics in the nineteen forties as well as the wider forms of popular consciousness to which these organizational practices were a response to.

This chapter makes no claim to provide a comprehensive alternative explanation. However it does attempt, in part, to correct the structuralism that has dominated many analyses of black politics in the 1940's. One way of escaping this structuralism is to look at the culture and consciousness of the people who undertook the political campaigns of the 1940's and to examine the popular activities and attitudes that fed into these militant struggles. The political developments of the forties occurred against a backdrop of an intensified attack on slumyards and an effective implementation of slum clearance schemes by the local state in Johannesburg. The next section is an attempt to show that a causal link existed between the destruction of the slumyards and the politicizations of Johannesburg's black population.

a) Urban Segregation and Its Effects on Popular Consciousness

Chapter 5 examined the increasing control that all levels of the state were able to bring to bear on the housing situation in Johannesburg. It also looked at the way in which urban segregation, location administration and location housing projects were financed by the introduction of a municipal beer monopoly in 1939. Already in 1943 the Native Affairs Commission noted that, "it is doubtful whether any one single factor has contributed more to urban native unsettlement and resentment than ... the raiding and searching of native dwellings."³⁶

The council reinforced its monopoly of beer sale by mounting massive raids for beer (and passes) in the townships. Towards the end of the war army troop carriers were converted to pick up vans to improve the efficiency of these raids and the press noted a massive increase in the number of arrests from the beginning of 1945. The average arrests per weekend for the first three months of 1945 was estimated to be 1,963 on the Reef.³⁷ In January 1945 Edwin Mofutsanya complained that the council was launching successive night raids to check on lodgers permits at a time when the "acute housing shortage forced many people to shelter their relatives who had nowhere else to stay."³⁸ These raids imposed severe restrictions

on the beer trade and marabi culture was stripped of a number of the factors that gave it its vitality and resilience. Municipal regulations required residents to produce a marriage certificate in order to acquire a location house, thus disrupting the informal extended family networks that had developed in the yards. Also marabi music, the lifeblood of marabi culture, was deprived of the conditions that nurtured it. An example of the restrictions imposed on marabi parties is provided by the minutes of the Orlando Advisory Board in 1933, which resolved that "all night entertainments be not allowed in private houses - that is, entertainments that are conducted for money - by reason of disorder, rowdiness and being a nuisance to neighbours."³⁹ Under these tight restrictions in the townships marabi disappeared and gave way to the big jazz bands that began forming in the 1940's. These, however, were more adept at playing for commercial concerts organised in the 'Community Halls' that were built in most locations. The close relationship that had developed between musicians and shebeen queens in the slumyards was completely disrupted and Ernest Mochumi a marabi pianist from Doornfontein remembers that there were no longer any opportunities for him to play the piano in Orlando and that he had to take up the trumpet instead.⁴⁰ Marks Rammitloa - a prominent C.P. member and organiser of the Alexandra bus boycotts and squatter movements - argues that one effect of this was that rotating credit associations developed without any parties and liquor involved. He sees an advantage in this because marabi parties used to detract from attendance at meetings and their demise allowed for "political action due to heightened consciousness."⁴¹

The attack on the slumyards influenced popular militancy in other ways. The slumyards had been popular because of their closeness to the places where their inhabitants worked and the fact that transport to work did not have to be paid for. The removals placed an extra strain on the subsistence levels of families. According to the Johannesburg District of the Communist Party, families had to give up 15% of their average earnings and had to sacrifice "food and other essentials" to pay for the increased transport costs to and from the segregated locations. However it also stressed that "even if the cost of transportation were entirely excluded from the budget of an African family, their income would not be sufficient to cover their needs."⁴² During the Alexandra bus boycotts of 1943 Inkululeko, in its editorial, claimed that:

"It has horrified many Europeans to discover that people are prepared to walk 20 miles a day rather than pay an extra 2d. bus fare", and the newspaper explained that "wages are so low that the African members live in starvation conditions, are largely unable to keep themselves alive, clothed and housed. Two pence a day increase will sentence many to a slow death from starvation."⁴³

As with most other services needed for the reproduction of the working class the transport question which was brought to the fore by the struggles of the Alexandra residents, became a focus of severe conflict between the local and central state apparatuses. Basically the dispute was over "who should pay the transport costs resulting from the policy of segregation."⁴⁴ When the matter was debated in the City Council the Communist Party representatives argued for the local state to intervene and provide this essential service.

The ratepayers party vehemently objected and demanded that the matter be left in the hands of the central state.⁴⁵ The Minister of Transport, on the other hand, objected to the fact that in the absence of capitalist and local state provision of transport, "it falls upon the Government to subsidize the railways in the industrial areas where the Africans have been segregated to a distance of 10 to 12 miles from their places of work."⁴⁶ Meanwhile the Government did little to allay popular feelings by planning a 10% increase on railway fares from Orlando to Fimville to to town. The effects of these inroads into the subsistence levels of black workers combined with the destruction of urban informal sector activities helped to produce the spectacular outbursts of popular militancy in the 1940's.

It has been noted that an initial response, by slumdwellers, to segregation was to take refuge in the freehold areas of Alexandra and Sophiatown. Here Marabi culture was able to survive tenaciously as a means of support for the evicted slum residents. Modikwe Dikoko provides an inside view of the differing opportunities for survival in the freehold areas and the municipal locations, "Outside of Sophiatown was known as the area of starvation."⁴⁷

However, after the removal of the slumyards, Alexandra and Sophiatown became the next targets in the local state's drives to segregate the city. In the late 1930's white ratepayers living near Alexandra formed the North Eastern District Protection League and conducted a vigorous campaign to abolish the township and open it to white ownership. At the same time pressure from white ratepayers in the western suburbs was mounting for the removal of Sophiatown.⁴⁸ The Council was responsive to these pressures and set up conferences to discuss with the Government "ways and means of dealing with Alexandra township and Sophiatown."⁴⁹

As people moved around the city searching for places where they could escape the scrutiny and control of the state over their daily lives the net began closing ever tighter. This social geography must be taken into account in any explanation of the militance of the forties. As the slumyards, which were relatively free of state control, were removed so the black labouring classes became increasingly determined

to hold onto Alexandra and Sophiatown - where they still had some degree of independence. The threats to black freehold property also welded these classes into a popular alliance with the petty bourgeoisie property owners - although as we shall see this alliance was not without its own internal fractures. It was not surprising therefore that as the slumyards - the centres of a defensive popular consciousness - were destroyed these areas became the centres of the new aggressive popular struggles of the forties and fifties.

In 1943 Tommy Peters, the Secretary of the Alexandra Anti-Expropriation Fund, reflected on this growing militant mood amongst the people; "the Alexandra residents regarded this expropriation move as a further threat to the condition of the North Eastern people (of Johannesburg) by taking away from them their only self controlled township."⁵⁰

In 1945 the American Board Mission reported that,

"a good deal of unrest in (sic) being caused in Johannesburg by the city's post war town planning schemes. The agitation for the abolition of Alexandra township seems to have been abandoned but a scheme has now been evolved for removing all Africans from the western areas, Sophiatown, Newclare and Western Native Township."⁵¹

Finally the same pressures from local white ratepayers that forced the local state to adopt a Stallardist model of urban segregation in the 1930's continued to exercise an influence over the local state in the following decade. Thus once, ^{a measure of} urban segregation had been achieved the local state concentrated on limiting and reducing the size of the african population in the town - a population whose reproduction had to be ensured and financed by the local state. As a result of the continual need to reduce the financial burden on the city's ratepayers the local state began imposing a stringent set of controls on the 'surplus' african population in the early forties.

In 1942 the Council appointed the Elliot Committee to investigate the increased crime rate in Johannesburg and endorsed its recommendations that special courts be set up to endorse africans, unable to produce proof of employment, out of the city under Section 17 of the Urban Areas Act. In September, 1942 Inkululeko reported that "this year" 604 africans had been arrested, 123 sent home and 636 warned to find work under this Section.⁵²

In 1945 the Johannesburg city council began pressurizing the government to amend the Urban Areas Act to allow for the more effective eviction of illegal residents of townships and hostels from the city. In 1946 this pressure was intensified and the

town council, opposed only by the Communist Party representatives, asked the Government to proclaim the whole of Johannesburg as a "step towards checking the present influx of natives into urban areas." Colin Legum (of the Labour Party) supported this move by claiming that "the large number of Africans coming to Johannesburg was harmful to the urbanized African, as they competed with them for jobs and brought wages down by building a reservoir of cheap labour."⁵³ In the absence of support from the central government the council also resorted to a range of other tactics to limit the size of the "surplus" black population in the towns.

The harsh implementation of lodgers and visitors permits in municipal locations was used as a means of excluding the wives and relatives of workers from living in the city. The council also attempted to exclude unemployed Africans from its huge emergency camp for squatters at Jabavu - a way of restricting the influx of rural africans into the city.⁵⁴ It also attempted to create a form of influx control for women by planning to introduce a system whereby women would have to carry medical certificates and produce these on demand before they could be employed.⁵⁵

These harsh actions on the part of the local state can thus be seen as an extension of the Stallardist policies that went into the making of urban segregation in the 1930's. As such these local state policies also intensified the effect that urban segregation had on limiting the ability of the working classes in Johannesburg to find informal means of survival in the city. As a result influx control and the implementation of lodgers permits became the objects of many spontaneous and militant outbursts of popular violence in the municipal locations. "The measure of African dissatisfaction at this reversal of their hopes", for example, says Davenport, "can best be seen in the determination with which an Anti-Pass Campaign was set in motion in Johannesburg in May 1944."⁵⁶

These activities on the part of the local state also indicate that some of the classical features of what has come to be called the Apartheid State, were being created at a local level in response to popular struggles for survival, long before the Nationalist victory of 1948. This suggests that it is necessary, for any explanation of the emergence of the Apartheid State, to examine the local struggles that were taking place between the Johannesburg city council and the city's black working classes and the influence that these had on the support given to Nationalist policies by the white electorate in 1948.

Before going on to look at these struggles and their effects on the form of the state in South Africa it is useful to remember that urban segregation, and the extension

of urban segregation in the form of the local state controls just mentioned, were not the only causes of urban militancy in the 1940's. Space and the fact that the focus of this chapter is on the effects of urban segregation on political struggles do not allow for a full explanation of all the causes of these political movements. However there were factors specific to the forties that influenced these struggles and the nature of local state responses and for the sake of a more balanced view a brief overview of these factors is undertaken here.

b) War Time Conditions and their effects on the Working Class' Ability to Survive in Johannesburg.

During the second world war the manufacturing sector of the South African economy experienced rapid growth. This was because of the protection offered by war time conditions and demand for goods of war like munitions, arms and food supplies for soldiers. The net output in manufacturing industry thus grew from £87 in 1939/40 to £158 m in 1944/5 - an increase of 81.6%. Industrial growth was accompanied by a growing demand for semi skilled black labour as skilled white labour was diverted into military campaigns overseas.⁵⁷

Industrialists also insisted that labour supplies in the urban areas were inadequate to meet their expanding requirements and that the reserve army of labour had to be expanded in the towns. The Native Pass Laws Commission of 1946-48 expressed this view when it argued that;

"In estimating labour requirements one has to remember that, where there is great industrial activity, it is also necessary that there should be a substantial reserve of labour - people who are ready to step in when others fall out or when there is increased activity in some industry..."⁵⁸

Because of these demands from industry, the central government was obliged to relax its implementation of influx controls. The municipal labour censuses carried out under the Native Laws Amendment Act of 1937 had already shown that very few 'surplus' Africans existed in the towns and that industry was experiencing a severe shortage of labour. In May 1942, after government concern at the number of pass law arrests and convictions by local magistrates, the Departments of Justice and Native Affairs instructed the police to refrain from enforcing the pass laws, save where people were breaking the law. At the same time considerable liberal influence was being brought to bear on the central government and a change of outlook began to appear

1946 and 1951 increased from 1,1 to 1,7 to 2,3 million respectively. This represented 17,22 and 27% of the total african population."⁶⁰

Other factors may also have played a part in this mass migration to the towns. Hindson argues that industrial expansion also absorbed most of the newly arrived rural dwellers and that the "impact of accumulation was to reduce and not, as is often asserted, to increase the reserve army of industrial labour, or surplus population."⁶¹ Wolpe and Leggassick, on the other hand, in a reformulation of earlier theories about the nature of the Apartheid state, argue that the possibilities for state intervention in the labour market, that took on a specifically repressive form after the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948, were established by the development of a large industrial reserve army in South African towns in the 1940's. They argue that prior to this period the growth of the industrial reserve army was restrained by the maintenance of some forms of precapitalist production in the african reserves and the survival of labour tenancy as the dominant form of labour on white farms - both of which allowed to africans to retain possession (as opposed to ownership) of some means of production in the rural areas. "That is to say the extent to which the agricultural population actually passed over into an urban or manufacturing proletariat was inhibited by the specific conditions under which it was formed."⁶² They go on to argue that by the outbreak of the second world war, a large "floating" surplus african population in the towns had emerged. They see this as the major reason for the housing shortages of the forties and the emergence of shanty towns as a form of popular resistance to the urban conditions that resulted.

If it is unclear whether the increased urban african population was absorbed into wage labour or whether it resulted in the emergence of a large reserve army of labour then it is also unclear whether the newly arrived townsmen came from the reserves or from the white farms. Morris argues that white farms had almost completely replaced the reserves as sources of labour by the 1930's. He notes the Tomlinson Commission Report's statement that of "of the increase in the number of urban Bantu residents since 1936 the European farms and other rural areas contributed 40%, the Bantu areas 8%, foreign centres 23% and natural increase of the towns themselves 29%."⁶³ Hindson, on the other hand, shows that the number of farmworkers in fact increased during the forties and that the extent of labour tenant migration to the towns may have been exaggerated by white farmers.⁶⁴ Thus he claims that "the reserves rather than the white farming areas appear to have been the major source of new supplies of industrial labour during the 1940's."⁶⁵

These debates about the role of the industrial reserve army and about the precise

rural origins of the newly proletarianized african population in the towns are important for any understanding of the causes of urban militancy in the forties. The actual experience of proletarianization, the amount of access to rural land and the access of newly urbanized workers to jobs would obviously, have influenced people's political outlooks.

However space does not allow for an examination of these factors in much detail here. For our purposes it is more important to note that the massive increase in the urban population made it extremely difficult for the local state, given its system of financing the locations from the 'Native Revenue' account, to meet the reproduction needs of the urban working classes. According to Hindson;

"Breaches of the influx control barrier, which became increasingly frequent in the 1940's ... had a serious undermining effect on the entire super-structure of local state financing and control. Because of the part played by the local authorities, this would also directly threaten the ability of the urban African proletariat to reproduce itself."

He goes on;

"The intimate involvement of the local authorities in the provision and control of housing inevitably drew it into direct confrontation with Africans over a range of housing and related issues."⁶⁶

As an illustration of this point it can be noted that according to the Department of Native Affairs, 154,185 extra family houses and accommodation for 106,877 single people was needed in the urban areas in 1947.⁶⁷ These were the factors that led first to extensive subletting in the locations and then to the militant squatting movements of the forties, which in turn evoked an intensified repressive response on the part of the local state. As a result a cycle was set in motion that polarized the situation and politicized large sectors of the african population.

Popular anger was also intensified by the privation that accompanied the war. During the war inflation caused the cost of necessary items of consumption to increase by 20 to 50%.⁶⁸ In 1943 Inkululeko complained that "£1 today buys what 15/- did before the war."⁶⁹ By 1942 the average wage paid to unskilled workers in Johannesburg was 25/- per week - a large increase over wages in the 1930's. Nevertheless most families now relied completely on these wages and over 90% of all families earned less than the minimum subsistence level.⁷⁰ In 1944 reports were being received that coal supplies had run out in Orlando and Alexandra and that this meant no hot food, no warmth in homes, and no hot water and irons for women doing washing for whites to earn a living by.⁷¹ In 1940 the infantile mortality rate in Johannesburg reached a level of 579.97 out of 1000.⁷² An Interdepartmental Commission of Enquiry reported in 1942 that "there is overwhelming evidence of an

appalling amount of malnutrition amongst urban natives, both old and young."⁷³ Three years later the Council of Reef municipalities complained of, "difficulty in obtaining food for municipal workers and for animals used for transport purposes."⁷⁴ The state responded by appointing another commission to inquire into the supply and distribution of food as well as a Nutrition Council.⁷⁵

These state responses were, however, hopelessly inadequate as a way of trying to stem the tide of popular militance that was to come. As the impact of urban segregation combined with the effects of war time inflation, food shortages and inadequate housing the labouring classes of the city intensified the new forms of struggle that they had begun to engage in in the late 1930's.

3) Popular Struggle and Political Organization in the 1940's

Some of the tenants movements that developed in the late 1930's were organized with the assistance of the Communist Party. However much of the impetus came from a deep seated shift in the mood of the people. This is reflected in the marked increase in spontaneous rioting and violence that occurred in the forties. Late in 1944 this was shown in a street battle that lasted for hours in Sophiatown after a black man was run over by a tram. The newspaper the Bantu World had its premises burnt down and white thugs prevented the fire brigade from putting the fire out. Rev. Michael Scott a local clergyman argued at the time,

"Behind this violence must have been the Native's incessant anxiety about rising prices, food shortages, beer and pass raids and an unsympathetic handling by Europeans with whom they come into contact."⁷⁶

The Springs location, Payneville, was the scene of severe rioting as women brewers picketed the local beer hall. Police intervention on this occasion left 5 blacks dead and 101 imprisoned.⁷⁷ In 1946 in one of the Orlando squatter camps a group of policemen were attacked by angry squatters. One policeman was killed and several hundred squatters wounded in a battle that lasted late into the night and which only ended when the police retreated to the Communal Hall and locked themselves in until reinforcements arrived in the morning.⁷⁸ The next year in the emergency squatter camp, Moroka, three policemen were killed in what was perhaps the biggest rent strike in South African history. This was organized by the Pinville Sub-tenants Association.⁷⁹ Both these events were said by the editor of Inkululeko to have been the result of a change in location administrative policy from one of attempting to coopt a small group of blacks in the locations to "one of open dictatorship."⁸⁰

This kind of direct action was also characteristic of the peoples' way of handling

food shortages during and after the war. Communist Party organized squads in Fordsburg, Ferreirastown, Westgate and Sophiatown raided shops that were hoarding essential foodstuffs and forced them to sell at the controlled prices. In some cases food was seized and then distributed to people in an orderly fashion.⁸¹ The Communist Party likewise organized food cooperatives in an attempt to reduce the cost of living. Rent increases were also fought for by these squads. At one stage the Communist Party, Labour Party, National Council of Women, Leather Workers Union, ANC and the African Building Workers sat on a joint committee to plan these food and rent groups. The Communist Party argued that there had the advantage of creating "a feeling of solidarity, self reliance and collective responsibility."⁸²

However by far the most impressive of the urban movements of this decade were the massive bus boycotts and squatter movements. Space does not permit a detailed examination of these here. The bus boycotts which occurred in Alexandra in 1942, 1943 and 1944 and in the locations of Pinville and Pretoria were all remarkably successful in preventing fare increases - despite intense harassment from the police and officials of the local state. At their height the squatter movements involved between 80,000 and 90,000 people. The Department of Native Affairs reported in 1945 that;

"this unrest is distinct from the more common form of industrial unrest due to dissatisfaction with wages and conditions of employment. It results from dissatisfaction with living conditions in the townships."⁸³

According to Stadler - "Squatting, bus boycotts and rent boycotts may all be seen as different efforts to reduce the costs of those components of subsistence which could be changed by collective action."⁸⁴ - a kind of collective action that was based on the same impulse to maintain levels of subsistence that characterized slumyard culture, but which differed markedly in its militant political nature.

In chapter 4 we examined the relationship between marabi culture and political organization. Thus it is now useful to look at developments in organized african politics once marabi had gone into decline. It has become a commonplace argument that the immediate post war years saw a radicalization of the ANC and its transformation into a movement with strong organizational roots in the working class. The main protagonist of this thesis is Dan O'Meara who bases his argument on the role of the ANC in the organization of the 1946 Mineworkers strike and the subsequent anger that the brutal suppression of this strike created.⁸⁵ This thesis represents a substantial advance on earlier interpretations that the ANC in this period was dominated by a 'bourgeois' direction.⁸⁶ However it does suffer from two weaknesses.

O'Meara tends to generalize about the effects of changes in the political economy on african political organization and he largely ignores the role of workers and the industrial reserve army outside of the mining sector of the economy in the struggles of the decade. Both of these problems stem from an over reliance on Wolpe's original thesis that a collapse of the reserve economies was the prime cause of the main political developments at the time. David Harris has corrected this focus on the struggles of the mineworkers by pointing to the range of struggles that occurred outside of the workplace around housing, rent, food and transport - "community action on these matters became the location counterpart to industrial action in the factories."⁸⁷

The aim of this section of the thesis is to suggest some of the ways in which these struggles influenced and were influenced by formal political organizations at the time. To some extent the ANC responded to these local township struggles, unlike during the 1930's.

In 1944 the ANC coordinated a large anti pass campaign that was supported by the Communist Party and a large number of trade unions. On this occasion 20,000 people marched through the streets of Johannesburg carrying banners and the ANC flag to the strains of a large brass band.⁸⁸ Anti Pass campaigns were seen as the means of linking the diverse local struggles that were erupting at the time as they struck at an issue that was always seen as tied to the inadequate provision of housing, municipal rule over the townships, the restrictions on popular entertainment, police raids for permits and beer and the threats to african freehold residential areas. When asked whether the Alexandra squatter's movement linked up with the struggles of other areas Schreiner Baduza replied, "The link up was through Congress. Congress did that. Congress organized all the other areas - the Anti Pass Campaign and all that."⁸⁹ The ANC also gave verbal support to the shanty town movements at "Orlando, Ventereniging and Bloemhof", seeing them as "a prelude to a mass movement for decent accommodation" and deplored "the intransigent and hostile attitude adopted by the Johannesburg Town Council."⁹⁰ The programme adopted at a national ANC conference in December 1946 reflected a mix of class interests - combining demands for representation in Parliament, land and property rights and improved education with significant demands for the recognition of african trade unions and better health and social services for blacks.⁹¹

The Communist Party had also played a leading role in the formation of militant tenant organizations that organized around these local urban issues. Its members were prominent in the tenants' associations, food co-ops and action committees that organized the Alexandra and other bus boycotts. There was also a close link between

these struggles and an increase in party membership - illustrated by the sweeping of the Payneville advisory board elections by the Communist Party after the Beer Hall riots.⁹² Its members also initiated the creation of a Shanty Town Coordination Committee which organized a 7000 strong march through the streets of Johannesburg to demand houses and land for africans.⁹³ This committee, to a limited extent, operated to coordinate trade union and community action over wages and increased rents.

It nevertheless would be a mistake to overestimate the extent to which popular feeling and consciousness was channelled and coordinated by these organizations. Neither the ANC nor the Communist Party were able to achieve the kind of populist support displayed by the squatters in the largest camps in Orlando - those led by charismatic and individualistic leaders like James Mpanza. The one organization that did have some influence in these camps was the African Democratic Party, but this was never able to formulate a programme that consolidated any mass support.⁹⁴ The leadership was effectively left in Mpanza's hands who:

"Placed himself at the head of the biggest political upheaval, at community level, in the 1940's - and yet Mpanza was in effect profoundly anti political. He launched bitter attacks against all the political parties (the ADP excepted), and he and his followers were reported to have broken up meetings in the township."⁹⁵

Similarly the CP was never able to incorporate the squatting movement into a wider campaign - either theoretically or practically. Their members who organized the Alexandra movement were essentially grass roots leaders acting in their capacity as members of the Bantu Tenants Association. In fact they were initially actively opposed by the party leadership who was repelled by the idea of people living under hessian sacks in the veld and suspicious of the motives of shanty leaders - who they believed were profiteering from the subscriptions paid by squatter camp members.⁹⁶

According to Dikoma, the Communist Party:

"put forward arguments against squatting and the squatter leaders had to defy the leadership of the party. We were cut off from the activities of the C.P. group in Alexandra. Baduza and myself were convinced that we wouldn't get back. The A.N.C. saw it (the squatter movement) as a loose, undisciplined organization. Individual members like Hilda Watts and Brahm Fischer were sympathetic. But there was no official support from the party at this stage. A lot of this was due to health reasons."⁹⁷

However Baduza describes how he and Dikobe worked hard at convincing the Communist Party that their movement was not organised in the same way as Mpanza's. This together with the growing mass nature of the squatter movement forced a change in the Communist Party's policy. By January 1947 it acknowledged that it had underestimated the political significance of grassroots tenants movements, paid tribute to the militancy of the squatters and argued that their action was an effective challenge to the Land Use and Urban Tenants Act - which underpinned the exploitation of black urban workers.⁹⁸

But the Communist Party was never able to incorporate this form of mass action effectively into a theoretical programme, nor were they able to provide a leadership that coordinated the local struggles of the squatters into a unified movement. This was due to their inability to counter the appeal of popular leaders like Kola and Mpanza and also because of the intensely local nature of struggles in different areas.

The unique nature of Alexandra and Sophiatown as freehold suburbs shaped many of the struggles there. Threats to the autonomy of these suburbs created a popular hostility to the state that was not equalled in other locations. Alexandra was also unique in as much as its transport problems were different to other areas that were served by train and tram lines. However, the specific nature of Alexandra and Sophiatown also underlay many of the political weaknesses of the movements there. During the bus boycotts a remarkable cross class unity was displayed in Alexandra - which accounted for much of the success of these struggles. The Squatter movement was different. It involved active conflict between the tenants and property owners in the township and at one stage there were reports of property owners organizing thugs to beat up the squatters and force them back into the rooms that they were rackrenting to the tenants. This was compounded by the fact that prominent ANC leaders were also wealthy stand owners. For example, R.G. Baloyi, the treasurer of the ANC, who at a meeting of the Standholders Association in Alexandra vowed to chase the Communists out of the township - two weeks after two members of the Bantu Tenants Association had been assaulted at a meeting.⁹⁹ These local peculiarities also meant that the Shanty Town Coordinating Committee, which was never fully supported by the leaders of the two Orlando camps, did not do anything effective to unite the demands of the squatters apart from organizing the march through Johannesburg. There were also organizational weaknesses in the municipal locations - like Pitville where tenants and subtenants began to squabble amongst themselves over rents charged by the tenants - leading Inkululeko to complain that "this house affair between them should not blind the two parties to their common interest - houses for all Africans."¹⁰¹

Similarly, the A.N.C. was initially distanced from the squatter movements.

"The Communist Party did expand its membership at this time,"

says Dikobe.

"It had a platform over pass raids, soaring prices and the war itself. The ANC did not yet have a platform on these issues. It was divorced from the people and had old fashioned slogans. It couldn't deal with new issues like rents and houses. Some of the ANC also consisted of middle class standowners."102

However in the aftermath of the brutal suppression of the 1946 Mineworkers Strike and with the example of mass militancy and cohesion displayed by the squatters, the ANC leadership became more responsive to popular feelings and attitudes. In 1946 the Transvaal Branch announced that the squatter movement was a prelude to a mass movement for better housing and condemned the city council's policy toward squatting.¹⁰³

The distance between the locally based popular movements and the national political organizations must, therefore, force a more careful assessment of the effect of these on the class orientation of the ANC after the war than that made by Dan O'Meara. The following assessment of the situation is probably a more accurate one:

"During the 1940's under the stimuli of industrial action, communal protest and passive resistance and an increasingly repressive social and political climate, the African Congress's leadership had reached the point of embracing a strategy based on class action."104 (my italics)

The form that this strategy would take was to be displayed in the fifties and the Defiance Campaigns. At this stage it is convenient to conclude the thesis by making some comments on the relationship between the struggles of the forties and the growth of an "increasingly repressive social and political climate" which culminated in the emergence of the Apartheid state.

4) Popular Struggle and The Apartheid State

Until recently most analyses of the changing nature of the South African state have focussed on the shifting conflicts and alliances within the dominant classes as the main factors affecting the form of ^{the} state. These analysts use Poulantzas' concept of 'hegemony' and the 'power bloc' to explain this. The state's primary role is seen as that of organizing the long term political interests of the dominant classes. However the dominant 'power bloc' is seen to comprise of several bourgeois class fractions and sometimes involves alliances with other non capitalist classes present in the social formation. These fractions often have conflicting interests and the unity of class rule is achieved by the "hegemony" or ideological direction that one fraction, often in alliance with other class fractions in the power bloc, is able

to impose over the power bloc. The political interests of this fraction, which becomes the dominant class, are then the prime determinants of the nature and form of the state.¹⁰⁵ Applied to South Africa this type of analysis is then used to suggest that in the late forties an alliance of afrikaner capital, agricultural capital and sections of the white working class came to form the hegemonic alliance within the power bloc, in opposition to manufacturing capital. Debates over the migrant labour system and the role of the industrial reserve army are seen as the central issues involved in the conflicts within the ruling classes at this stage. The rise to hegemony of the alliance led by afrikaner capital is seen as the main reason for the repressive aspects of the Apartheid state - the maintenance of the pass laws, the reinforcement of the migrant labour system, the ejection of the industrial reserve army into the countryside and the propping up of the reserves to accommodate the surplus black population.¹⁰⁶

This school of thought, crudely summarized here, has been criticized for focussing on relations and conflicts within the dominant classes to the extent of excluding the dominated classes and the primary contradiction between capital and labour from having any bearing on the nature of the state.¹⁰⁷ In his most recent work, Poulantzas displays a concern to correct this bias evident in his earlier writing:

"If we are to understand the internal divisions of the State, the concrete mode in which its autonomy functions, and the establishment of its policies through characteristic fissures, then we cannot confine ourselves to contradictions among the classes and fractions of the power bloc: for those processes depend equally, or even above all, on the State's role vis-a-vis the dominated classes."¹⁰⁸ (or, *final italics*)

He argues that the precise interlinking between the state's apparatuses and the way in which they function are determined, not only by political developments within the power bloc, but also by the "role these apparatuses have to fulfil with regard to the dominated classes."¹⁰⁹ Here popular struggles are given a crucial role in determining the nature of the state. As forms of concentrations of power in opposition to the power of the dominant classes these struggles have a direct impact on the different policies adopted by dominant class fractions and the state apparatuses to contain contradictions in the social formation - "This explains the differential organization of the army, police and church in various states and accounts for their particular histories that are also traces left in the state structure by popular struggles."¹¹⁰ He also stresses that these direct forms of the contradiction between the dominant and dominated classes make their presence felt within the state in a

"mediated form through the impact of popular struggle on the contradictions among the dominant classes and fractions themselves"

and that:

"In a particular conjuncture or over a longer period, differences of tactics or even of political strategy are among the prime factors of division within the power bloc itself."¹¹¹ (original italics)

Thus broad political options are, for Poulantzas, the essence of the contradictions that exist within the power bloc^{and} mentioned in chapter 2 one of ^{these options is} "the choice of the very state forms to be established against the popular masses." (my italics)¹¹²

These ideas are very suggestive as ways of explaining the relationship between popular struggles and the realignments and changing policies within the power bloc that resulted in the emergence of the Apartheid form of state in South Africa. In the 1940's the growth of the urban african population in Johannesburg and the popular struggles over rent and housing renewed tensions between the local and central state that had been partially reconciled during the economic boom of the post depression years.

As the central government followed the Smit Commission's suggestions of relaxing influx controls during the war, the local state in Johannesburg responded by intensifying its repressive action against the city's industrial reserve army. Some of these actions have already been mentioned. This direction of local state policy was again illustrated in 1946 when, in an attempt to limit the size of the squatter population in Johannesburg, the council moved the Orlando squatters to the Jabavu township. Before removing the squatters the police threw a cordon around the camp and only those families of men "genuinely employed" in Johannesburg were given houses in Jabavu - the rest were evicted.¹¹³ In 1946 attempts were made to deport James Mpanza and in 1947 Schreiner Baduza was exiled to Hammanskraal.¹¹⁴ In 1947 after the establishment of the Moroka Emergency camp to house squatters, the council attempted to deport all men and women who had been in Johannesburg for less than two years and restricted accommodation in this camp to people who were married - an attack on the informal marriage arrangements whereby the city's black lumpen-proletariat, proletariat and casual poor combined their resources in order to survive. Rents were also fixed at the astronomically high level of 15/- per month in this camp in order to prevent the influx of poverty stricken refugees from the rural areas into it.¹¹⁵

At the same time the council intensified its pressure on the central state for a change in the implementation of influx control - with a measure of success. In 1946 the Fagan Commission was appointed due to the widespread dissatisfaction with the liberal pass law reforms suggested by the Smit Commission earlier in the decade. In the same year the Minister for Native Affairs, van der Byl, announced a scheme to check the influx of africans into the city by proclaiming Johannesburg under

section 10 of the Urban Areas Act - thereby requiring rural africans to obtain the permission of the Native Commissioner in their area before going to Johannesburg.¹¹⁶

Inkululeko also reported on the existence of two "concentration camps" in Louis Trichardt and Komatipoort to house africans who had been kicked out of the towns in 1947.¹¹⁷ These signs of central state responsiveness to local pressure were, however, combined with central state opposition to the repressive approach to the squatters adopted by the city council. In February 1947 the government refused to bow to council demands that it be allowed to evict thousands of squatters and to prevent any relatives and friends from visiting the emergency camps. The minister insisted that it was the duty of the council to provide land and health services to the squatters.¹¹⁸

Clearly the question of financing the services needed for the reproduction of the city's black working classes was still a major source of discontent amongst the ratepayers of the city.

Populist white racism and anger was fanned by the struggles of the dominated classes - this was reflected in the action of white thugs during the race riots in Sophiatown and the burning of the Bantu World's offices.¹¹⁹ Also the town council's call for the tightening of pass laws, the deportation of unemployed africans and the extension of passes to women was directly influenced by the actions of white vigilante groups that were formed to hunt down "vagrant" africans in Klerksdorp and Johannesburg. In response to the growing wave of crime undertaken by Johannesburg unemployed Hilda Watts was driven to comment on the growth of white racism at this time in a speech to the city council.¹²⁰

If the influence of nascent afrikaner capital was important in securing the Nationalist Party victory in 1948, then clearly the white urban classes behind the policies of the local state in Johannesburg were also crucial in mobilizing white support for the policies of the Nationalist Party - support that was growing and influencing the activities of the state before 1948. Rodney Davenport argues that the "Swart Gevaar" fever that swept the Nationalists into power in 1948 was a direct response by whites to the activities of a "radical cadre of leaders" at the head of black industrial and commercial organizations in the forties and the "squatter settlements" which were the "first outbursts of political bitterness."¹²¹ He also notes that many managers of local Native Affairs Department were showing increasing concern for "the spread of subversive political ideas" and supported a repressive approach to black politics.¹²² Even before the elections took place this kind of thinking was reflected in a massive operation in which 1,000 policemen and "a one and a half mile long convoy of lorries, motor cars, vans and motor cycles invaded Pinville"

in order to root out and remove "the lawless element in the township."¹²³

After the elections the actions of the new government indicated the extent to which the concerns of the white privileged classes in the terms exercised an influence over its policy. In June the Nationalist minister Schoeman announced plans to make the reserves hold more people so that "all who have no business in the town" and who were "in excess of local labour requirements" would be deported.¹²⁴ This was not an empty threat. In August 400 mounted police swooped on the Denver hostel in a massive beer and pass raid that resulted in the arrest of 400 blacks.¹²⁵ In August plans were announced to evict all african subtenants and those not living in authorized municipal locations from the city.¹²⁶ By November the Minister of the Interior Dr. Donges was able to boast to a N.P. meeting in Stellenbosch that 4,400 "vagrant natives" had been cleared out of Johannesburg in the past 4 weeks.¹²⁷ Theo Wassenaar the leader of the N.P. in the Provincial Council was explicit about the motivation for this: "We cannot allow the development of one mass black proletariat which would be able to muster against the whites."¹²⁸

The impact of local struggles undertaken by the black working classes in Johannesburg, and other South African towns, in the forties was thus a crucial factor in the emergence of the Apartheid State. These struggles were, in turn, at least partially a result of the destruction of the slumyards that had provided the conditions for the passive political ideas that accompanied marabi in the twenties and thirties.

The culture of the black working classes in South African towns and its eventual destruction is thus a vital and neglected factor that must be considered in any examination of ^{the} class struggles and State responses that shaped South African society in this period. This concluding chapter is a preliminary and very partial attempt to do this. Hopefully future studies will be able to expand upon and develop the ideas that have been presented here.



Removals - from Prospect Township
to Orlando



Schreiner C. duze



The Alexander Squatters Committee

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER SIX

1. See Harris, 'Homes, Prices, Transport',
Stadler, 'Birds in the Cornfield'.
2. See Chapter 2.
3. See Chapter 4.
4. O'Meara, 'Class and Nationalism', p. 94.
5. Walshe, 'African Nationalism', p. 142.
6. Walshe, 'African Nationalism', p. 143.
7. Walshe, 'African Nationalism', p. 145.
8. Written reply from Edwin Mofutsunyana to questions communicated to him.
Received September 1983. Acknowledgements to Bob Edgar for conveying the
questions and replies.
9. Simons and Simons, 'Class and Colour', p. 470.
10. CPSA, Karis and Carter Collection, Reel 7A, File 2:DA14: 30/3.
11. Umsebenzi, 30/1/37.
12. Umsebenzi, 30/3/37 and 10/4/37.

Umsebenzi, 8/5/37, 15/5/37, 1/5/37.
13. Umsebenzi, 20/5/37, 29/5/37.
14. Umsebenzi, 29/5/37.
15. Guardian,
16. Report of the South African Native Affairs Commission, U.G. 42, 1941, p. 20.
17. Cohen, 'Pledge for Better Times', p. 56.

19. Proctor, 'Class Struggle', p. 79.
20. Abantu Batho, 17/7/1930.
21. Guardian, 5/4/1940.
22. Guardian, 6/10/39.
23. Harris, 'Prices, Homes, Transport', p. 11.
24. Interview, Schreiner Baduza, Johannesburg, 26/3/1982.
25. Interview, Modikwe Dikobe, September 1981.
26. Interview, Modikwe Dikobe, September 1981.
27. Interview, Schreiner Baduza, 26/3/1982.
28. Interview, Schreiner Baduza, 26/3/1982.
29. Interview, Modikwe Dikobe, September 1981.
30. Harris, 'Prices, Homes, Transport', p. 13.
31. Guardian, 11/9/41.
32. Inkululeko, 9/10/43.
33. Guardian, 17/7/41.
34. Guardian, 23/7/42.
35. O'Meara, 'Class and Nationalism', chapter 6;
36. Guardian, 4/2/43.
37. Inkululeko, 14/4/45.
38. Guardian, 25/1/45.

39. Phillips, Bantu in City, p. 293.
40. Interview, Ernest Mochumi, 27/10/1980 and 24/11/1980.
41. Interview, Modikwe Dikobe, September 1981.
42. Inkululeko, 9/10/43.
43. Inkululeko, 14/8/43.
44. Guardian, 14/12/44.
45. Guardian, 23/11/44.
46. Inkululeko, 30/10/44.
47. Dikobe, 'Notes'.
48. Harris, 'Homes, Prices, Transport', p. 12.
49. Harris, 'Homes, Prices, Transport', p. 12.
 Sophiatown was the general term at the time used to describe the three suburbs
 of Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare and is used here for convenience.
50. Inkululeko, 11/4/43.
51. NAD, American Board Mission, Box A3/45, Report of the Transvaal Field, 1945.
52. Inkululeko, 18/9/42.
53. Inkululeko, 1st issue 1946.
54. Guardian, 11/3/40.
55. Inkululeko, 29/10/45.
56. R. Davenport, South Africa: A Modern History, MacMillan 1977, p. 241.
57. Bloch, 'Development of Manufacturing Clothes', pp. 92 - 93.

58. Hindson, 'The Pass System', p. 124.
59. Davenport, South Africa, pp. 239 - 240.
60. Hindson, 'The Pass System'. p. 129.
61. Hindson, 'The Pass System', p. 124.
62. Legassick and Wolpe, 'Bantustans and Capital', p. 99.
63. Morris, 'State and Capitalism', p. 232.
64. Legassick and Wolpe, 'Bantustans and Capital', p. 103.
65. Hindson, 'The Pass System', p. 134.
66. Hindson, 'The Pass System', p. 47.
67. Hindson, 'The Pass System', p. 147.
68. Stadler, 'Birds in the Cornfield', p. 3.
69. Inkululeko, 31/7/43.
70. Harris, 'Home, Prices, Transport', p. 10.
71. Inkululeko, 22/7/44.
72. JCL, Report of the Medical Officer of Health, 1939/40, p. 9.
73. Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on the Social, Health and Economic Conditions of Urban Natives, GPS S7272, 1942/43, p. 5.
74. Inkululeko, 15/4/43.
75. A. Stadler, 'Food Crises in the Thirties - A Sketch', History Workshop, Wits University, 1981, p. 22.
76. Inkululeko, 11/11/44 and Guardian, 10/11/44.

77. Inkululeko, 14/7/45 and 28/7/45.
78. Guardian, 14/4/46.
79. Guardian, 17/7/47.
80. Inkululeko, September 1947 (Only one edition appeared in September).
81. Guardian, 25/5/46 and 6/6/46.
82. Inkululeko, 6/11/43 and 9/10/43.
83. Bloch and Wilkinson, 'Urban Control and Popular Struggle', p. 27.
84. Stadler, 'Birds in the Cornfield', p. 6.
85. O'Meara, '1946 Mineworkers Strike',
86. Lodge, 'Destruction of Sophiatown', p. 1.
87. Harris, 'Homes, Prices, Transport', p.8.
88. Inkululeko, 29/5/44.
89. Interview, Schreiner Baduza, 20/3/82.
90. Guardian, 28/2/46.
91. Inkululeko, Issue 2, 1946.
92. Inkululeko, 3/12/45.
93. Guardian, 23/1/47.
94. Harris, 'Homes, Prices, Transport', p. 41.
95. Harris, 'Homes, Prices, Transport', p. 40.
96. Interview, Modikwe Dikobe, 3/5/81;
Interview, Schreiner Baduza, 20/3/82.

97. Interview, Modikwe Dikobe, 3/9/81.
98. Inkululeko, January 1947 (Only one edition appeared in January).
99. Guardian, 30/10/47.
100. Interview, Schreiner Baduza, 20/3/82.
101. Inkululeko, 1st issue May 1946.
102. Interview, Modikwe Dikobe, 3/9/81.
103. Guardian, 28/8/46.
104. T. Lodge, 'The Creation of a Mass Movement: Strikes and Defiance 1950 - 52'. African Studies Institute Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, 1981, p. 1.
105. For a brief summary of these ideas, see N. Poulantzas, State, Power, Part 2, Chapter 1.
106. See, R. Davies, et al., 'Class struggle and the Periodisation of the State in South Africa, Review of African Political Economy, No. 7, 1977.
107. See D. Innes and M. Plaut, 'Class Struggle and the State: Towards a critique of the Poulantzian Position' Review of African Political Economy, No. 11, 1978.
108. Poulantzas, 'State, Power', p. 140.
109. Poulantzas, 'State, Power', p. 141.
110. Poulantzas, 'State, Power', p. 141.
111. Poulantzas, 'State, Power', p. 143.
112. Poulantzas, 'State, Power', p. 144.
113. Guardian, 11/3/46.
114. Inkululeko, 18/2/46;

Interview, Schreiner Baduza, 20/3/82.

115. Inkululeko, 2/4/47.
116. Inkululeko, 2nd Issue May 1946.
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120. Guardian, 12/2/48.
121. R. Davenport, 'African Townsmen: South African Natives (Urban Areas) Legislation through the Years', African Affairs, Vol. 68, No. 271, 1969, p. 103.
122. Davenport, 'African Townsmen', p. 103.
123. Guardian, 12/2/48.
124. Guardian, 17/5/48.
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